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"So, are you trying to say that the driver held a grudge and chose to take revenge on the Acree's using such a method?" Sonia spoke.

Tom shook his head slightly. "After our men learned about the conflict between the driver and the Acree's from the Acree's butler, they immediately contacted the driver's family and friends and tried to understand what kind of a person he was. They learned that the driver did not intend to retaliate against the Acree's in the first place. Since his attempt to ask for reasonable compensation failed, the families of the dead fishermen who worked under him began to vent their frustration on him, blaming him for accepting the job and bringing those fishermen to sea. They blamed him for their family member's death and the compensation they did not receive. Over time, the guilt toward the deceased and the resentment toward the Acree's intensified, and he began to devise a revenge plot."

"I see," Sonia sighed. "Oh, the poor man."

"Don't you find anything strange in this situation?" Toby crossed his legs and inquired out of the blue.

"What do you mean?" She blinked in puzzlement.

"It's understandable that the driver wanted to seek revenge. Anyone would not let the Acree's off the hook after what they did. Regardless, the meaning behind my words was, how did the driver know their itinerary? How did he know they would attend the banquet tonight and the precise time of their departure? Do you think an ordinary man like him could have access to the information so easily?" Toby picked up the wine glass in front of him and shook it lightly. His gaze was incomprehensible as he glanced at the red liquid swirling in the glass.

Sonia was taken aback for a moment before coming to her senses. "Yeah, you're right. He was an ordinary man, so it would be hard for him to obtain such information unless he bribed the Acree's butler or maids. But that would be an impossible feat because he doesn't have the money."

"So, the problem here is self-explanatory." Toby narrowed his eyes. "Most importantly, who tampered with the Acree's car, and when did they do it?"

"You're saying that this is not a simple revenge plot. Someone else is involved behind the scenes." She immediately grasped what he was implying.

Toby declined to comment but simply continued, "The driver did seek revenge, but it would not be easy for an ordinary man like him to succeed. Although the Acree's are not doing so well now, the driver could not get in touch with them easily, let alone bring them down like this. So, how did he obtain such accurate information as when they would leave and where they were? It meant that someone else was behind this. The mastermind should be the Acree's competitor, and he was helping the driver. The mastermind is powerful and resourceful too, which explains why they knew about the Acree's precise itinerary and how they could easily tamper with their car. Then, all they needed to do was contact the driver and ask him to wait on the route that the Acree's would pass through. Well, we know how the rest turned out."

"That makes sense!" Sonia clicked her tongue in awe at his sharp deduction." From how the Acree's handled the maritime disaster, we can tell they have crossed the line several times, so it is not surprising that they have other enemies. The enemy of my enemy is my friend. These people worked together to retaliate against the Acree's. It serves them right!"

Toby didn't say anything in response. "But it's just a pity that the driver died without taking any of the Acree's with him. What's the point of such revenge?" Sonia sighed sadly.

"Actually." He raised his chin and quipped, "His revenge has been successful."

"Oh?" She looked at him in astonishment. "What do you mean?"

"The driver is burdened by guilt and death. His wife's death and the fishermen's death were the last straws. These had long crushed him and made him lose his will to live. His choice to retaliate against the Acree's by dying together shows just exactly that. It also meant that he was willing to work with the mastermind even though they wanted him to die."

"He wanted a way out," Sonia bit her lips and mumbled.

"Yes." Toby sipped his wine. "It would be the best of both worlds if he could drag the Acree's with him as he died. Even if he couldn't kill any of them, his death, as well as the Acree's heinous crime, would be circulated on the Internet. Ordinary people worldwide would empathize with the driver, especially when he was forced to such an end because of the Acree's. Once they discovered the driver's side of the story, the Internet would be in an uproar, and the news would spread like wildfire."

"I know. I've experienced this before." Sonia felt a bit of a headache building.

Toby held her hand and gently squeezed it. "By then, the government will definitely investigate the Acree's to defuse public outrage. Then, the investigation will expose all the illegal things they had done, and the government will charge the family. Even if they

did not do anything illegal, they would be doomed because of the maritime disaster alone.”

“Yes. According to the law, the Acreees were guilty because they disregarded the danger of typhoons and urged the fishermen to go to sea, which was the direct cause of their death. They made matters worse by not giving reasonable compensation. The government will not let them off the hook,” Tom added.

She finally understood the whole situation. “Oh, I see. So, this is what you mean that the driver’s revenge has been successful.”

“Yup. The collapse of the Acreees is the nail in the coffin, and some of them may be seriously injured after the accident. To them, this is worse than death. It can be considered a successful revenge, don’t you think?” Toby curled his lips into a cold smirk, and his eyes were full of contempt for the Acree Family.

At this moment, Tom inquired, “Mr. Fuller, do you want me to investigate the mastermind who helped the driver?”

“No.” Toby shook his head. “This is not our business. It’s the Acreees’ problem, so there’s no need to investigate. Besides, the mastermind has indirectly helped me to get rid of them. But it’s their problem if the police find out about them.”

He was right. So, Tom nodded and stopped asking questions.

Not long after, Tom’s phone rang. He glanced at Toby, and after seeing his nod of approval, Tom took out his phone and answered the call.

Two minutes later, Tom ended the call, placed the phone down, and looked at Toby and Sonia with a strange expression. Toby pursed his lips and urged, “What is it? Tell me.”

Tom nodded and said, “It’s the man we sent over to keep an eye on the Acreees. He got the results of the Acreees after the car accident. The driver died. Mr. Acree survived the accident but was pronounced brain-dead and has become a vegetable. Miss Acree is quite unfortunate as her leg was amputated. Mrs. Acree is the luckiest one. She only suffered some superficial injuries and nothing serious. However, I’m unsure if she can survive the ordeal she has to face later.”

In short, the fate that awaited them would only be tragic or worse.

The only innocent person in this situation was their driver. He did not do anything bad but died simply because he was their driver. What a tragic and sad life.

“Alright, the Acreees’ matters end here. Call our men back. There’s no need to waste useful resources on them.” Toby massaged his temples and rose to his feet.

Sonia, whose hand was held by Toby, naturally stood up as well.

He glanced at her and asked, "I'm going to meet Harry and Lynette. Do you want to come with me?"

"No." Sonia shook her head. "I don't want to see them, and I think they don't want to see me either."

"Okay. Wait for me in the car. I'll be right there." He gently ruffled her hair and lightly tucked them behind her ear.

To be honest, he didn't want her to accompany him either. He knew the Lores' temperaments like the back of his hand, so he knew they would be far from repentant.

Although they would not dare to do anything to Sonia when he was there, they would silently glare at her or something similar. Of course, he did not want her to go through such an encounter.

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"Alright. I'll wait for you in the car. Don't take too long." Sonia did not reject Toby's suggestion and merely nodded in agreement.

Toby stroked her hair gently. "I'll be quick. Half an hour at most."

"Okay." She nodded with a smile. "I'll be waiting."

He looked at Tom. "Send her to the car." He didn't want her to go to the car alone.

She knew that he had asked Tom to escort her because he was worried that she would stumble upon some people on the way, so she didn't refuse and walked away with Tom.

After Toby watched them leave and their figures disappear from his sight, he shoved his hands in his pockets and strode toward the direction of the elevator.

The room where Harry and Lynette were a few floors below. It was not on the floor of the banquet hall.

When he arrived at the room's door, the two bodyguards who guarded the entrance greeted him respectfully, "Mr. Fuller."

"How are they?" Toby stopped in his tracks and inquired.

One of the bodyguards glanced at the closed door and reported, "Both of them are inside. We check on them every ten minutes, and they didn't do anything unusual."

Toby nodded slightly. "Open the door."

"Yes, sir."

The two bodyguards nodded, reached out simultaneously, and pushed the door open for him.

Both Harry and Lynette heard the sound of the door opening, but none of them looked up. They were not interested because they assumed that it was the bodyguard again.

Harry sat on a big chair with his eyes half-lidded. He seemed to be asleep, and it was as if he was thinking about something at the same time. Meanwhile, Lynette, who sat next to him, lowered her head as she bit her nails, looking fidgety and anxious.

Their demeanor made the atmosphere in the room very strange.

At this moment, Toby's crisp and emotionless voice broke the awkward silence.

"Mr. Lore." He entered without further ado. His eyes swept past Lynette and fixed on Harry's extravagant chair. He lightly parted his thin lips and called out to Harry.

Harry immediately jolted awake when he heard Toby's voice. Lynette stopped biting her nails and raised her head abruptly.

"Toby." Lynette immediately stood up when she saw him. The resentment in her mind instantly dissipated, and it was replaced by endless joy and surprise.

She loved him. Well, she despised him a little when he ill-treated her because of Sonia. Nevertheless, the minute she saw him again, the anger disappeared, and all that was left was joy and excitement.

Alas, Toby did not even look at her as if he couldn't hear her at all. Instead, he simply glanced at Harry and met his eyes with a dispassionate gaze.

Lynette was annoyed by his indifference, but she did not dare to act rashly due to her fear of him, so she could only stomp her feet in frustration. Finally, she huffed in displeasure, sat back down, and turned her head away.

Oh, I'm so pissed! She thought in her mind, How dare he ignore me! Okay, I'll ignore him too. I won't say another word to him unless he comes and comforts me.

Nonetheless, it had never crossed her mind that Toby would not care about her feelings since he did not like her at all. She was nothing to him.

Unfortunately, she thought too highly of herself and was too confident.

Meanwhile, Harry watched their interaction—or lack thereof—gingerly. If Toby had ignored Lynette in the past, Harry would have been upset about it and reprimanded Toby for his dismissive behavior. But now, he knew that Toby despised him and his family and had completely lost his patience with them. Therefore, he could not rebuke Toby, no matter how disgruntled he was.

After all, the highest thing on his priority list was to coax Toby.

He would only irritate Toby further the instant he scolded Toby, and it wasn't worth it.

As Harry was thinking about this, he donned a despondent expression on his face. "Toby, do you hate us that much? Am I not your mentor anymore?"

Toby's monotonous address just now made his heart sink. It showed that Toby despised everyone in the Lores, including himself.

He initially thought that Toby would still respect him, although he hated Lynette and Grayson, or at the very least, he would still feign respect when facing him.

It was never in his calculations that Toby would not separate Harry from the Lores. He couldn't even bother to put on a façade. This was bad.

Toby pulled the chair opposite Harry and sat down. He graced the old man with an aloof gaze and noticed that the old coot still had the gall to feel irritated because of his indifference. "How do you have the cheek to call yourself my mentor after what you have done?"

Harry frowned in dismay upon hearing Toby's question. "What do you mean by that? What have I done? Explain this clearly, or you'll get an earful from me."

Toby narrowed his eyes slightly. "Since you want to know, I'll cut to the chase. First of all, as a teacher, you should establish a good morality to guide your students and future generations to good graces and virtue. In addition, you have to be kind, righteous, trustworthy, and so on. Do you think you have those wonderful qualities?"

Harry's face turned red and pale. His mouth was slightly agape, but no words came out of it. What did he expect him to say anyway? He was too embarrassed to say that he had those qualities after what Grayson and Lynette did, and he also did something...

Still, he was reluctant to say that he did not have those qualities. He knew that the moment he said it out loud, it would mean he wasn't fit to be a mentor.

Hence, no answer seemed to be the correct answer.

Harry froze as he sat in the chair, feeling ashamed and indignant.

Toby was not surprised by Harry's silence. A trace of mockery flashed in his eyes as he opened his lips again and forged on, "You don't have any of those qualities. As a mentor, you openly ridiculed your mentee's lover and deemed her worthless. You even advised your mentee to break up with his lover. So, let me ask you, which mentor will do something like you did, Mr. Lore?"

He looked at Harry, but Harry still couldn't even stammer out a satisfying answer.

Toby's eyes fluttered shut slightly as he added, "When you knew that I, your mentee, was in love, shouldn't you give me your blessing? Shouldn't you congratulate me? This is the first time I've heard a mentor advising his student to split up. Not only that, but you also badmouthed her and belittled her. Is this something a mentor does?! Besides all of these, you failed to set an example for your family. As a result, your family members are selfish, greedy, sinister, and evil. You did not correct their mistakes as a mentor and an individual who holds the utmost respect in your family. Instead, you foolishly supported them and thought they were not at fault. So, tell me, what makes you think you have the right to call yourself my mentor? Why do I have to regard you as my mentor?"

Harry stared at him with his bloodshot eyes, feeling angry and guilty.

He was furious because, as his mentee, Toby behaved so disrespectfully by ridiculing him like this.

On the other hand, he felt discomfited because Toby forcibly tore off his disguise and exposed the most despicable and shady side of him.

Yes, despicable and shady.

Actually, Harry knew very well what kind of a person he was, but he had long been used to disguising his true character behind his mask. So over time, he almost forgot the ugly side of himself.

Hence, when Toby exposed his disgusting side, he felt mortified and agitated.

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Similarly, Lynette could not accept the accusation.

When she heard Toby describing their family as selfish and manipulative, she immediately exploded in anger, jumping up and down as she pointed a finger at him.

“Toby, what do you mean? Our family is nothing like what you described! Your words are too hurtful. Not only that, my grandpa is your mentor. How could you deem him unqualified? You—”

“Am I wrong?” He stared icily at her and cut her off, “Isn’t the Lore Family exactly like how I described?”

“I...I...” Her rage tapered off when she looked into his unemotional eyes, and she started stammering. She had trouble stringing words together.

Despite that, he did not let this slide. “As for your grandpa, he is indeed unqualified to be my mentor. After all, I chose Professor Randall over him in the past. Had it not been for that accident, and my urgent need for a supervisor for deeper research, I would not have picked your grandpa as my mentor.”

Harry was seething when he heard that.

At first, he was already incensed when he was branded as an unqualified mentor by Toby. His entire career was being brushed off by Toby’s words.

When he heard the mention of Professor Randall, his expression crumbled. Guilt, disquiet, and nervousness flashed across his face.

Meanwhile, Toby had been quietly observing the old man, and he looked grim when he saw the range of Harry’s emotional display. Indeed, he had brought up Professor Randall’s name on purpose. Earlier, he had a feeling that Professor Randall’s death was not an accident—Harry Lore might have been involved in it, especially since he would be the greatest beneficiary of Professor Randall’s passing.

Toby also dispatched secret investigations on any potential foul play by Harry in Professor Randall’s death. Unfortunately, most clues and traces of the incident were gone after many years. It was a difficult mission to get to the bottom of it, which explained Tom’s lack of updates for a while.

Just now, Toby deliberately dropped Professor Randall’s name to observe Harry’s response.

If Harry was calm, it would suggest that he had nothing to do with Professor Randall’s death, which could truly be an accident.

If the opposite happened, it would indicate that Harry might have something to do with Professor Randall’s death.

Now, the link between Professor Randall’s death and Harry’s involvement had been established. Why else would Harry appear guilty and nervous at the mention of Professor Randall’s name? Harry must have suffered from a guilty conscience.

Toby secretly put himself down, feeling that he had not done enough for Professor Randall, whose advice he sought the most during his college days. Their bond was as strong as a family. Therefore, Toby was greatly impacted by his professor's death.

He had once decided to drop the matter if Professor Randall's death was an accident. However, if it was murder, he would avenge his beloved professor. Alas, he had accepted the police's report without questioning—it ruled the death as an accident.

Many years later, when he revisited the circumstances and details surrounding Professor Randall's death, he found many inconsistencies.

Now that he had confirmed Harry's involvement, he decided to avenge Professor Randall amid his anger and hatred. Again, Professor Randall was his first choice, not Harry Lore. Given that he had enjoyed a father-and-son-like relationship with Professor Randall, he could not sit back and do nothing about the professor's death.

Most importantly, he was tortured by the guilt of selecting Professor Randall's murderer as his supervisor.

Toby was overcome by a wave of remorse. He clenched his fist tight until his veins were bulging. Along with guilt, he suffered from regrets. He regretted being swept away by his degree studies to the point that he had no time to investigate the details behind Professor Randall's death. He also regretted his lack of research into Harry's background and character before hastily making his supervisor pick.

Had he investigated the details behind Professor Randall's death and looked closer into Harry's character, he would not have become Harry's student, and he would have already avenged Professor Randall. Not only that, the Lore Family would not have had the chance to hurt his Little Leaf.

All these missteps stemmed from his oversight in the past.

Because of his carelessness, Professor Randall suffered from a wronged death for years. As for him, he unknowingly chose the enemy as his supervisor. On top of that, he even provided support for Harry, helping the Lore Family to flourish and prosper.

Even if he had done the above out of his ignorance of the truth, he indirectly became the accomplice of Professor Randall's murderer.

Ah, Professor Randall must have resented me in the afterlife.

At the thought, his breathing became heavy, and his eyes burned with hatred. Still, Harry and Lynette did not notice the changes in him because he was looking at the ground.

Speechless at Toby's interrogation, Lynette angrily took a seat and looked to the side, stubbornly ignoring him without an idea about the seriousness of the matter. Unlike her, Harry knew the implications of Toby's accusation and felt uneasy. What does Toby mean? Why would he suddenly bring up that Randall guy? No way! Is he suspecting me? No, that is unlikely because he did not mention Professor Randall for years and never suspected the details behind the death. It would not make sense for him to suddenly be skeptical about it.

Harry concluded that Toby must have casually mentioned Professor Randall during his heated rebuttal against Lynette. He came up with explanations and finally soothed his restless mind.

Still, to prevent complications, he pretended that he did not hear any mention of Professor Randall, and he avoided mentioning the name. He forced a smile at Toby. "Toby, I know you are resentful of me for causing friction in your relationship with Sonia. You must blame me for not giving my best in teaching her and forcing her to carry out certain actions. I—"

"Mr. Lore, did you really think that I was only blaming you for that?" Toby interrupted his speech. Harry's expression froze as he was gripped by the bad hunch from earlier.

What was that? Is he doubtful of Randall's death?

Toby looked pensive at Harry's changing emotions. He stood up but did not elaborate. "My original plan was to wait until the end of the event to discuss the direction of our future partnership. But now that Lynette had sneaked out to harm my other half, I suddenly realized that it is futile to discuss with certain bull-headed people. If so, there is no point in having the discussion. I have issued a statement to clarify our relationship. Also, I have canceled and withdrawn all partnerships with the Lore Family, as well as the attached benefits. I wish you the best moving forward."

"What?" Harry lost his cool and stood up. "You canceled our partnership?" He had a wild look of disbelief.

At first, he thought that Toby had only issued a statement, but the partnership was safe. To his dismay, Toby canceled everything, including the benefits that came with the collaboration, such as a free event venue and free-of-charge factories.

If that were true, where would he settle his staff and store the company equipment?

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Clearly, Toby was set on ruining the Lore Family.

Harry went up to Toby anxiously. "Toby, you can't do this! You are going to push me—your mentor—to the brink! Aren't you afraid of gossip?" Eyes bulging, he confronted Toby loudly.

Toby, on the other hand, was calm as usual. "Why should I be afraid? If I had a fair and upright mentor who did not wrong his student, perhaps I would actually worry about people's judgment of my actions. But sir, are you being fair and upright in the first place?"

Harry's eyes wavered, and he stumbled backward out of shock.

Toby scorned, "You did not display any qualities of a mentor. Not only that, you manipulated the relationship between your student and his partner. You allowed your grandchild to bully your student's partner, without so much as an apology afterward. Are you still hoping that I will spare you after all those?"

Knowing well that this would spell the end to the Lore Family's fortunes and realizing the impossibility of wooing Toby, Harry fainted and fell on his back in a fit of anger.

A frightened Lynette screamed at the sight, "Grandpa!"

Her scream made Toby stop to check on them. When he saw Harry on the floor, he hesitated momentarily before deciding against helping his ex-teacher. Instead, he asked the bodyguard at the door to send Harry to the hospital.

No matter what, he would never let Harry die at this point in time. Otherwise, things might get complicated.

Once Harry was lifted into the ambulance, Lynette, his only family member at the scene, followed him into the vehicle. Before that, she paused to glare at Toby with fury and resentment. "Toby, I won't forgive you if anything happens to my grandpa."

Then, she climbed into the ambulance with a heartbroken look.

Toby stood watching the ambulance speeding away without any change in his expression. Tom, who was standing behind him, rolled his eyes. "Oh, isn't she hilarious? All that talk about her forgiveness, when the reality is that you don't even care about her."

For Toby, Lynette was a nobody, and he would not spare a thought for her. Lynette could only be best described as having an inflated sense of self-importance. She overestimated her importance to him.

"Alright. Let's go," Toby said and went into the hotel with Tom behind him.

When they arrived at the basement parking lot, Tom unlocked a car with a button on his key, and the headlights of a nearby Maybach flashed.

A drowsy Sonia, who had been waiting in the car, perked up when she heard the sound and checked the window. She smiled at the sight of the two tall figures walking toward her.

However, just when she opened the car door, a large and pale hand immediately pushed against the door to stop her. She blinked in confusion. "What's the matter?"

Toby bent over and looked at her via the tiny opening. "Don't get out of the car. It's cold outside. Stay there. I'll join you soon."

He wanted to shut the car door, but she stopped him. "Wait!"

He paused and looked at her again. She beamed. "You don't have to go around the car! Just enter from this side."

After that, she moved across the seat to make space for him. Seeing that, he chuckled and obeyed.

Tom settled down in the driver's seat. "President Fuller, are we going back to the Bayside Residence?"

"That's too far from here. Let's go to one of my units nearby." Toby stared at an exhausted Sonia, who yawned out of sleepiness. Tom nodded at him and started the engine.

When Sonia let out a huge yawn, she was too tired to think and did not catch their conversation, which she did not care about in the first place. She was fine with any destination, as long as she was in their good care.

"Are you very tired?" he asked. "Mmhm," she answered softly while nodding. Something in him stirred when he heard the tender voice, and his desire was awakened.

Swallowing hard, Toby put his arm across her shoulder and guided her to lean against his thighs. "If you're sleepy, lie down and take a nap. I'll wake you up when we arrive."

"Sure." She accepted his suggestion after a yawn, rested her upper body against his thighs, and closed her eyes.

He stared at her and, worried that the crown headpiece might be uncomfortable for her, he gently took it off. He was unaware that the headpiece helped to secure her hair, and once it was removed, her hair came cascading down like a waterfall and spread across his hand.

Sonia's soft and silky hair was cold to the touch, and he started caressing it with much love. As if that was not enough, he even picked up strands of her hair and pressed them against his nose for a whiff. He picked up the crisp and enticing scent that stimulated his desire for her.

Unfortunately, they were in the car, with a third wheel in the driver's seat. Toby regretfully suppressed his urge and went back to caressing her hair. His touch must have been too comfortable for her, as her eyelids became heavy.

Toby leaned over to give her a peck on her fair cheeks. "Go to sleep." His soft and mesmerizing voice seemed to have a charm that lulled her to sleep.

"Is Miss Reed asleep?" Suddenly, Tom whispered. Toby took off his jacket and draped it across her. "Yes."

Hearing that, Tom whispered with a lower voice, "What should I do with the two other families?"

Earlier, Toby had decided to deal with the two families along with the Lores. However, Harry's fainting disrupted his plans, and he temporarily put the matter aside. Still, he had to deal with it eventually.

"Are they still at the hotel?" he asked calmly while admiring Sonia's sleeping face.

Tom nodded. "Yes. After the two girls created trouble for you and Miss Read, we arrested them and informed their parents. They are with their parents now and waiting to meet you for an apology. In the meantime, the parents have already disciplined the girls."

"Oh?" Toby looked amused, and his fingers stopped caressing Sonia's face. "What happened?"

Tom chuckled. "The parents knew that the girls brought trouble to the families for offending the Toby Fuller for Lynette's matter. So of course, they were incensed. They gave their daughters a good beating immediately after seeing them."

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"Is that so?" Toby did not react much.

"Yeah. I heard the girls were properly schooled by their parents." Tom stole a glance at the rearview mirror. "But I didn't have the time to check on the situation because I was

with you. I got the news from the professional bodyguards we hired. If the bodyguards said it was bad, it must have been serious.”

“The parents are putting on a show for us.” Toby went back to caressing Sonia’s face. “The harder they beat their daughters, the more they could show how determined they are at disciplining their kids. They hope we will feel bad and overlook this incident.”

“Put it bluntly, it is another attempt to gain sympathy.” Tom shrugged.

“Ignore them and do what is necessary. Look into these families for any criminal records. If there is, collect the evidence and hand it over to the inspectors—they happen to be investigating Triforce Enterprise recently and will be around for a while,” Toby instructed unemotionally.

Tom nodded and asked, “What if there’s nothing?”

“In that case, let’s get their business partners to cancel their partnerships as a warning.” Toby was stern and unyielding.

“Got it,” Tom answered, knowing that Toby was being lenient this time. It made sense to cancel part of the business partnerships if they did not have prior criminal records. The two families should be thankful instead for not having all the partnerships canceled—at least they were spared.

“Judging from the behavior of their children, I do not believe that their families have squeaky clean records,” Toby scoffed. Tom agreed with him and nodded. He asked, “Should we release them home?”

“There’s no point in keeping them under arrest. Send them back but keep an eye on them, in case they are thinking of running away. Once the evidence has been collected, hand it over to the police,” Toby instructed Tom while pulling the jacket on Sonia to keep her warm. Tom answered, “Understood.”

They spent the rest of the trip in silence. Only the sound of shallow breathing could be heard in the car.

Half an hour later, they arrived at Toby’s luxurious penthouse downtown. Tom parked the car and immediately went down to open the car doors for Toby and Sonia.

Toby lifted Sonia in his arms and got out of the car. “Is the place cleaned?”

“Don’t worry! I asked the management to clean the unit from the time we entered the car! They have made the bed too. You can take a rest right away.” Tom closed the car doors behind them. Toby grunted and walked to the elevators with Sonia in his arms while Tom helped to press the button.

Soon, the three of them reached the top floor. Tom keyed in the passcode and opened the heavy metal door for them. "President Fuller, have a good rest with Miss Reed."

Toby nodded at him. "You should get home and rest too. Before that, please take care of the things I mentioned before."

"Sure."

Tom closed the metal door once Toby and Sonia entered the penthouse. He finally let out a relieved sigh and headed to the elevators while being deep in a phone conversation. He seemed to have given out some orders.

The man on the other end nodded at Tom's instructions. Then, he put down the phone and gestured at someone near him.

"Sir." Another man swiftly came over. The bodyguard who took the call said, "I got a call from Mr. Brown. He said that President Fuller ordered the release of the people under arrest. We don't have to guard them anymore, but we have to monitor them secretly. Go open the doors for them."

"Okay." The second bodyguard quickly went ahead and opened the door of the private lounge.

Once the door was open, the gloomy air in the room instantly livened.

The two girls—one plump and one skinny—remained on the floor, but the rest of the people in the room perked up and jumped up from the chairs and couches. They barged toward the entrance excitedly.

"Is President Fuller here?"

"Is he here to meet us?"

The bodyguards were calm in the face of the great anticipation. They sometimes looked like robots in that aspect.

"President Fuller isn't here. He also did not say he would meet with you."

When the parents of the two troublemaking ladies learned that, the lights in their eyes instantly dimmed.

"Why isn't he coming?"

"He's the one who asked us to wait for him. Why would he change his mind?"

“Yeah! If he’s not here, how are we going to settle this matter? We’re anxious about it too.”

“Right! So, when is he coming?”

The four men and women could not stop demanding the reason behind Toby’s absence, which was not good news at all. In fact, they felt more petrified.

At the end of the day, their kids had offended Toby. If Toby refused to meet up, the parents could not gauge his stance on the matter and his preferred way of dealing with them. Without a certain answer, they were left sitting on pins and needles, which explained their impatience.

Had President Fuller shown up or even sent them a clear message on what to do next for forgiveness, they would not have been this distressed. Ultimately, the oldest and strongest fear was one of the unknown.

The bodyguards were unaffected by the nervousness around them. “It’s quite late now. He will not be coming.”

Their faces fell. “What? He’s not coming?”

“Why? Why would he do that? We waited so long for him over here. Why isn’t President Fuller showing up?” The four of them refused to accept the decision.

The bodyguards remained unemotional. “Miss Reed is tired and has fallen asleep. President Fuller had to take her home, and he will not make it over. Do you really think that you are more important than Miss Reed to him?”

The four dumbfounded parents exchanged glances. Of course, they would never claim that they were more important than Sonia Reed, even if they believed their issue was more urgent than Sonia’s sleep.

Still, none of them voiced out their thoughts, for they were sure that the bodyguards would report the situation to Toby. They would leave a worse impression on him. Hence, silence would be the best way forward.

A short pause later, one of the middle-aged men came forward and asked, “I know President Fuller won’t be here, but we still need to resolve this issue. Am I right? Did he say anything—for example, the type of compensation he wanted? As long as he puts in a request, we will try our very best to fulfill it.” At this point, they would do anything for Toby to forgive them. Their families had to be protected from the fallout of their daughters’ foolish actions.

The other three men and women nodded fervently. “Yes! We will give him anything within our means. Even if he wants us to surrender our daughters, we could do that. Our

only hope is for him to understand that this incident is solely the individual doing of our daughters, and it does not represent the families! Please do not come after our families.”

“That’s right! We didn’t know about the actions of these two rascals, nor did we order them to do so. Their doing was under Miss Lore’s order, which has nothing to do with us! But, as their families, we are willing to take the responsibility for their actions. We are even prepared to give them up if he says so! We really hope that there is no misunderstanding—the families are not behind their actions!”

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The words earned the approval of the rest of the parents, as they nodded profusely.

Yet, the two women who were lying on the floor full of pain felt nothing but sadness inside.

Although they were their parents, they could act so cruelly and abandon them, placing the family before them.

They admitted that they were foolish and were used by others to commit harm, but in the end, they were still their daughters.

How could they abandon us so easily like this? Are they still human?

Even though they could not accept this, the two women knew that their parents still cared about them. It was just that they did not care that much.

Often, familial relations were nothing for the wealthy, as when compared, which was more of value, the entire family or a daughter?

If just by abandoning a daughter, they could ensure the continuation of their riches for decades or even centuries to come, why not?

Besides, it was not as if they could not bear another child for the family. Besides their daughters, they also had other children. What they cared about particularly was a male offspring.

If they had a son, then a daughter would be even more insignificant. So what if they abandoned these daughters?

Hmph, how laughable.

As the two women lay on the floor, tears fell from their faces with an infinite amount of hatred surging from within.

They hated their family and their parents. Most of all, they hated Lynette.

They would not do anything to their families or parents, for they were raised by them for over twenty years and their families did not let them down either.

Yet, it was a different case for Lynette since they would not let her go this easily.

After being landed in this position, if they did not take their revenge, then they would be letting themselves down.

Exchanging glances, they swore to make Lynette pay.

At the entrance, their parents still did not know of their daughter's hatred, as they were still talking to Toby's bodyguards, hoping that they would pass the word on that he could do anything to their daughters in hopes of not touching their families.

The bodyguards, who saw that they would quickly abandon their daughters to save themselves, had a flash of disdain in their gazes, as they stated, "Don't worry. I will pass your word on. But the final decision remains with President Fuller, which has nothing to do with us. You all can go back now."

"Go back?" They were stunned.

Nodding, the bodyguard then pointed at the two women lying on the floor. "Bring them away too."

"Of course, of course," they responded quickly.

Not knowing how Toby was going to deal with them, both families were worried sick over the potential outcome.

Yet, the thought of being able to go back made them slightly relieved.

After all, if they could go back, why would they want to be locked up willingly here?

Besides, after going back, they could contact their relatives and friends to discuss how to lessen Toby's anger to preserve their bloodline.

So, after getting the bodyguard's permission, they quickly carried their daughters and left in a hurry.

After they left, the bodyguard immediately took his phone out and reported the proceedings to Tom.

Tom, who heard all this, told everything to Toby.

Toby had just finished showering and was dressed in a loose bathroom while standing in front of the window.

He was on the top floor of the building, which was a full two hundred meters from the ground. Lowering his head slightly, he could take in the whole skyline of the city. The scenery was spectacular.

Standing in front of the window, Toby was drying his hair with a towel in one hand while the other was holding a phone with Tom on the line.

After Tom finished conveying everything, Toby did not have much of a reaction, as he only replied, "Don't need to pay them too much attention. Just carry on with my instructions as before. As for those two women, you don't have to tell them to go abroad. If you do that, then who's going to set traps for Lynette?"

Tom understood Toby's intention.

Ah. So, the president wants to use them against each other. When it comes to schemes, President Toby really is the king.

"Understood, President."

Nodding, Toby replied, "Rest up for now."

They then ended the call.

Putting his phone down, Toby did not go back to his room right after, as he remained in front of the window and looked at the night view with his gaze flickering between light and dark. Nobody knew what was on his mind. He stood there until his hair dried. Only then did he throw his towel onto the couch and walk back to the room, where he hugged the woman who was in a deep slumber and slept.

The next day, it was already nine in the morning when Sonia woke up.

The unfamiliar environment, room, and bed shocked her, as she sat up and flipped the blanket over to look at her own body.

Noticing the distinct loose bathrobe that was not hers, she felt her heart sink, as an ominous feeling crept up from behind her.

Yet, after a close inspection of her body, she found no sore spots, which made her relieved.

Okay, I don't think anything happened to me. But where is this?

Pushing the blanket aside, Sonia got out of bed and wore the fluffy slippers by the bedside. Stepping on the blush cashmere carpet, she looked around the room with a heavy expression.

The room was massive, as she estimated it to be around a hundred square meters, which excluded the toilet and wardrobe. This was just the space for the bedroom.

Yet, nothing was placed in the room, saved for the bed and two bedside tables. With nothing else adorning the room, it seemed very cold and empty.

This made her think that her voice might echo back if she spoke in here.

Okay. So, where am I? And why am I here? Where are my clothes, bag, and phone?

Anxiously, Sonia started to look for her personal effects around the room.

In the end, she did not find them, yet she did find something on the bedside table. It was a glass of water and a paper note under it.

Moving the glass away in a hurry, she picked the note up, and the familiar writing on it eased her nervous heart.

It turned out that this place was none other than one of Toby's houses.

She was not kidnapped and confined in this space. Rather, Toby thought that Bayside Residence was too far away, so he decided to spend the night here. It was because this place was nearer to the hotel.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Sonia sat back down on the bed and smiled at the note. "You sure gave me a fright."

Rubbing her eyes, she put the note back on the bedside table before stretching and walking toward the exit.

Toby stated on the note that he needed to meet with a very important client from overseas that morning, so he had to leave early. But, before leaving, he had prepared breakfast for her, which was kept warm in the kitchen, so he wrote a note to remind her to eat it after she woke up.

Besides that, he had prepared the clothes she needed that were placed on the living room's couch alongside her bag and phone.

His attentiveness warmed her inside.

Walking to the living room, she noticed that it looked the same as the bedroom. Excluding a few essential electronics, it was pretty much barren with nothing much in terms of decor.

As expected, this matched his past styling, as one could feel the coldness of this place.

Rubbing her arms, Sonia looked toward the couch to find that a few bags of clothes and her bag were laid on top of it.

Sonia walked over and looked into the bags, inspecting the clothes, but she did not take them out. After taking a swift look, she took her bag and fished her phone out from within, checking to see if there were any missed calls or messages.

After all, it was already nine, and she was not in her office yet. Maybe someone had something urgent that needed her?

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Sitting on the couch, Sonia turned on her phone.

The moment the phone turned on, the notifications came popping until about ten seconds before it stopped ringing.

It seemed that a lot of people wanted to find her just over a night.

Sonia checked all the messages and found out that three people texted her. One was her current secretary, Rita, asking what time she was going to the company today since there was a meeting scheduled at eleven in the morning.

Another one was Grace, asking her how the banquet last night went, whether the Acres harassed Toby or not and whether she got harassed as well.

The last message surprised Sonia a bit, for it was from Zane, stating that he would be wrapping up the inspection in the countryside before returning to Seafeld the next day and wanted to treat her to a meal while also telling her about something important.

Sonia, who did not know what the important matter was about, ignored it for the time being and replied to them according to the time they were sent out.

Replying to Rita first, Sonia told her that she would arrive at the company around ten, so the meeting could proceed as planned without needing to delay it.

Rita must have been waiting for her news since, for she immediately replied after a few seconds with an 'Okay'.

Smiling, Sonia texted Grace back, saying that the Acree's did not show up at the banquet yesterday since they were involved in an accident and that neither Toby nor she got harassed, so she should not worry about it.

After sending it, Sonia waited for a while to see that Grace did not reply, so she decided to text Zane next.

Just like Grace, Zane might not have been on his phone at that time or was busy. Either way, he did not reply to her.

Sonia, who was not in a rush, knew that they would reply in due time, so she did not have to keep checking. Setting her phone down, she went to the kitchen to see what kind of breakfast Toby prepared for her.

The breakfast was placed in the microwave. There was chowder, a BLT sandwich, and a croissant.

He knew that she did not like a heavy breakfast, so after they got together, he slowly changed his eating habits to accommodate a lighter and healthier breakfast.

Also, he would prepare a lot of variety, all of which were delicious.

Opening the door of the microwave, Sonia touched the breakfast to find that it was not warm anymore, so she reheated it.

Two minutes later, Sonia was already sitting at the dining table to eat her breakfast.

In the midst, Grace called her.

"Mrs. Lane." Sonia took a bite of the chowder and greeted her.

Grace replied, "Hello, Sonny. I saw your text just now. I also saw the incident on the news just this morning. This really is frightening how the accident involving the Acree's was purposefully orchestrated by their enemy. But I think this is karma, seeing that they withheld the compensation for the death of their worker. So, they kind of have it coming. This is also a good thing, as hopefully they would learn their lesson and stop bullying others."

Nodding, Sonia replied, "I agree too. Bad people often don't meet a good ending."

All in all, she did not sympathize with the Acree's' current predicament one bit.

“Although the news didn’t state how bad the aftermath for the Acree’s was, apparently people are saying that Mr. Acree, the head of the family, is now a vegetable and their daughter a disabled. The wife is fine though, but the refusal of compensation regarding the worker’s death has angered the nation with the higher-ups already looking into their family. So, the Acree’s are confirmed to go bankrupt. If not for Mr. Acree becoming a vegetable, I wager he would end up facing jail time as well. In other words, Mr. Acree, who can’t move now, can’t pay the mountainous amount of debt and fine that the family will be needing to settle. With their daughter disabled as well, this means all this responsibility will fall onto Mrs. Acree. Tsk tsk. The mere thought of this suffocates me.”

Although Grace said this with a sad tone, her face had a smirk on it.

Since the Lane Family were upright, they looked down the most on families like the Acree’s who built their riches off others’ misfortunes.

This was why the Acree’s deserved what was coming to them.

“This might be because God can’t accept their behavior, so He decided to condemn them before anything happened to Toby.” Grace smiled.

Sonia smiled too. “You might be right, Mrs. Lane.”

“I wager for the next day or two, the front page will be covered with the incident with the Acree’s. We should be able to see them filing for bankruptcy this afternoon,” stated Grace.

Sonia took a bit of the sandwich before replying, “That is of course. Since the Acree’s have enraged the whole nation, all the citizens will be keeping a close eye on the development. To appease the public, the higher-ups will be reporting the proceedings of the Acree’s until the end, so we’ll be seeing updating news on this for the next few days.”

“With how big the Acree’s’ incident got, even the news regarding the Lores got pushed out of the spotlight.”

“The news about the Lores?” Sonia was perplexed.

This confused Grace. “Sonny, do you seriously not know?”

Sonia shook her head. “I don’t know what happened to the Lores lately.”

Grace had a face full of doubt. “This is strange. Didn’t Toby tell you that the Fuller Group announced him cutting ties with Harry officially last night? They also rescinded the extended benefits the Lores enjoyed because of their relationship, stating that Toby would have nothing to do with the Lores from then on. The announcement immediately made the front page and caused a huge commotion. It lasted until this morning with

what happened to the Acrees, then it got slightly cooled down. Even so, there's still a lot of buzz surrounding it, especially in the upper society, where everybody wanted to know what happened."

Upon hearing this, Sonia realized what she was talking about. "Oh, you mean this. Then, I know about it already. Toby did bring it up briefly last night, but I forgot about it after that. Plus, I just woke up, so I haven't had the time to check the news online. What does the public say?"

She wanted to know.

Pouting, Grace replied, "What else? Some commented that Toby did this because he had his reasons while others said that it was because Lynette tried to slander you online last time. They said that Toby chose to stand on your side, stating that he didn't know what gratitude was, abandoning his mentor because of a woman, and even backstabbing his family. Not only did he cut ties, he even took back all the protection he gave them. They also commented that isn't this just driving the Lores to their death? Such and such. It's all awful stuff in the end. The Lores are even crying online that they're innocent, causing the online community to blame Toby even more."

"What? They have the cheek to calm innocence?" Sonia laughed.

Grace got enraged by this. "Tell me about it. It's like they are re-enacting some lame soap opera. The Lores are all whining online, making themselves look like the most unfortunate victims. Especially their daughter, Lynette. She said that she did it on an impulse, yet Toby exacted revenge on your behalf. You've become an evil wench in the public's eyes now, and they are all commenting on how Toby has become a tyrant that has been hypnotized by a witch."

"Erm..." The corner of Sonia's mouth twitched.

Grace continued, "In conclusion, everybody thinks that Toby is too harsh on the Lores and that he is cold-blooded. Just because of such a small incident, he's treating his mentor like this and this shows he is worse than an animal. They even want to boycott the Fuller Group. Although the company isn't much affected, it must still suffer some damage regarding the company's reputation. Also, this wouldn't be the best outcome for Toby's image. Sonny, what actually happened?"

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In actuality, even Grace thought if Toby wanted to disown his mentor due to Lynette's actions from the incident and take back all the care that he had shown the Lores, then it would be cruel and heartless on his part.

Let's say that Lynette is really in the wrong and the Lores aren't exactly saints, this doesn't warrant how cold Toby is treating them. If Toby was such a cold person, I wouldn't be able to rest easy, knowing that Sonny is with him.

Yet, after meeting him once, Grace understood that he was not such an individual, as she knew he was not one to project a person's wrongdoing onto their entire family.

So, this can only mean that there is another reason why Toby is handling the incident regarding the Lores like this. It's just that people have yet to learn why.

At Grace's question, Sonia recounted the whole incident with Lynette and her henchmen truthfully.

Grace, who came to know the whole proceeding, slapped her leg in anger. "This is why I said that the Lores must've done something else. Otherwise, why would Toby do this? This daughter of the Lore Family is just a poison to society along with her entire family, scheming like sly foxes without any moral compass. Not only did the seniors in the family not properly lecture the next generation and apologize for their shenanigans after they were in the wrong, but they also conspired behind other people's backs. Especially that old fool, Harry. What a shameless thing to do at his age. And he actually calls himself a teacher."

The mention of Harry made Grace show a face full of contempt and scorn toward him.

Sonia pushed the empty bowl of chowder aside before stating, "I don't really understand this person as well. Mrs. Lane, I don't think you know about this, but he also talked bad in front of Toby about me in the past, advising that he should break up with me."

"What? Are you serious?" Shocked, Grace was furious. "This shameless fossil. How could he even intervene in his student's love affairs? I guessed that he only said that for his granddaughter. If you guys broke up, then that granddaughter of his would have a chance. Belittling others behind their backs? Laughable. How could such a person exist? Toby is also to blame for this, choosing such a crook for a mentor."

"Now that you mention this, it seems like this might have been a ploy too." Sonia peered through her eyes.

Curious, Grace asked, "What do you mean by this, Sonny?"

"We'll have to start from more than ten years ago when Toby was still in university. At that time, to delve deeper into the research of economics, he had to have a Ph.D., so he needed to find a mentor. Back then, the best econometrist was Harry Lore, and another

person, Professor Randall, whom Toby actually chose. Both Toby and the professor had even settled on the day of the first meeting when the day before, Professor Randall passed away abruptly, so Toby could only settle for the other candidate, which was Harry. Otherwise, Toby's mentor would've been Professor Randall instead of Harry."

"So, I see. It was because he didn't have another choice." Grace nodded. "This is why I found it strange that Toby chose a person like that old man to be his mentor. At first, I thought Toby had very low standards for choosing him. Yet, it was a pity that the professor he was supposed to be mentored under passed away just a day before."

Grace sighed.

Pursing her lips, Sonia stated, "Toby suspects that Professor Randall's death might have had something to do with Harry. After all, Harry would stand to benefit the most if Professor Randall died. Also, a lot of details surrounding his demise pointed to his death not being an accident, as it resembled more like a plot. This was why Toby thought that Professor Randall might have died at Harry's hand. Adding on Lynette's actions toward me and how the Lores managed their affairs led to Toby becoming overtly dissatisfied toward Harry, prompting him to cut ties with him. Otherwise, it would have been a bit extreme for Toby to cancel their relationship and take back what the Lores benefited under his care just because of Lynette."

"This makes sense too." Grace nodded. "So, Toby is investigating that professor's death?"

"That's right." Standing up, Sonia walked toward the couch. "Since he has his suspicions, he decided to look into it more. He wants to seek justice for Professor Randall. If Harry really did it, then Toby would not let him walk away scot-free. He also cut ties with Harry for the upcoming revenge since Toby would not have to act mercifully if they aren't related whatsoever."

"I understand now, but will Toby not explain this to the public? Now, the internet doesn't know why he cut ties with Harry, thinking that he only did that due to Lynette's actions, so they are all admonishing Toby's behavior, which will affect his reputation. Besides that, the Lores also all added fuel to the fire by putting on an innocent as-can-be facade online. This is all so infuriating." Grace was very upset.

Smiling, Sonia stated, "I'm not sure if Toby will make a statement or not. He didn't say anything to me. I don't think he will let himself be on the losing side, so he will do something about it. As for the Lores, just let them be the clowns that they are. They won't be able to do so for much longer anyway."

"If you say so. You should still ask Toby about this, though. Alright, I think we'll chat until here then. Curtis' assistant is here, saying that he forgot some documents in the study, so he wants me to find them and give them to the assistant," stated Grace before she went up the stairs.

Nodding, Sonia replied, "Okay then. You should settle that first. I need to go to work too. See you."

Picking her phone up, Sonia quickly checked the news online.

She skipped the Acree Family's news since it did not concern her, as she searched for any news between Toby and the Lores.

Although the incident was not attracting as much attention as the Acrees, she could still easily see some discussions about it.

At the sight of malicious comments regarding Toby, Sonia became upset. What do these people know?

She kept looking through the search results when she came across a video. Playing it, she found that it was Lynette's live stream.

In the video, Lynette sat on a bed in a very dim room, and the light that shone on her made her look very haggard.

Plus, Lynette kept crying in the video, as her eyes puffed up from all the crying. Owing to her adorable features, a lot of people pitied her.

Humans were predisposed to be weak against cutesy stuff, and Lynette fitted that description aptly, so how could the viewers not be moved when they saw her crying like this?

Including the viewers, even Sonia felt a tinge of pity for her.

Of course, that was but an instant since she knew what kind of person Lynette really was—someone who was innocent on the surface but dark-hearted on the inside.

In the video, Lynette was holding a box of tissue while drying her nonstop tears, stating how slandered she felt.

She was saying that she knew her faults now and how everything she did was for Toby. She claimed that she thought Sonia was a bad person who blackmailed Toby, so she wanted Toby to break up with Sonia, wording it like she did not have any other intentions while denying that she did not frame Sonia out of jealousy toward her.

Hmph, if I didn't know the truth, even I would've bought her words. How sincere she sounds.

Rolling her eyes, Sonia continued to watch the video.

After Lynette finished whining, she cried even more while closing in on the camera, asking the viewers why she fell into such a state.

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Lynette said she did it for Toby, thus she should take the blame alone if she was at fault. She would never drag her family into it, but Toby had gone too far this time.

She even mentioned how the announcement blew her grandfather off, resulting in his hospitalization. Toby further proved his cold-blooded side by not visiting him nor paying his greetings.

Her cries hit the netizens right at their soft spot, gaining her their support. Toby now became the target of criticism because Lynette intended to help him, albeit not grasping the whole situation and doing it in the wrong way. Still, it was callous of him how he decided to treat the Lore Family when she was helping him out, not to mention that her grandfather was once his mentor.

There were even comments about him being infatuated with Sonia. If he treated his tutor's family in such a way just for a woman, how would his action speak about the credibility of his company?

Would he be responsible for the products catered to the public when he did not show mercy to the Lore Family?

The website was flooded with comments at the drop of a hat. The majority took Lynette's side and reprimanded Toby, while the minority chose to keep quiet.

After all, there had been plot twists before this and they did not want to jump to a conclusion, especially when Toby had yet to elucidate his stance. Lynette's side story alone was not enough to say anything.

Needless to say, the rational outsiders filled only the minor part. Most of them believed in whoever shed more tears; their emotions prevailed over their judgments.

Sonia pitied the foolish netizens instead of getting angry, for they could not discern the truth. Thus, what was the use of being mad at the fools?

She shook her head and stopped paying attention to those impulsive comments and Lynette's crocodile tears.

She knew why Lynette started a live broadcast: to coerce Toby by leveraging the public's sympathy. With the help of the public's sympathy and pity, Lynette assumed that he would let the Lore Family off the hook once he could not put up with the oppression.

Ha... Naive.

In fact, Toby was never the one to give in to threats and he despised whoever threatened him. Lynette's action would not bring her closer to her objectives but would add more reasons for him to hate both her and the Lore Family.

Besides, would she succeed if the netizens boycotted the Fuller Group?

Forget about the company's nonparticipation in the food industry as well as the necessities manufacturing, which were industries that could easily be boycotted, the company mainly indulged in the heavy industry; real estate; tourism; technology, and other fractions involved in the running of society's daily life.

Unless one decided to live with nature and never lay foot in civilization, it was compulsory to buy those necessities. Therefore, boycotting the Fuller Group was out of the question.

Despite their empty words on the Internet, the netizens knew that such an alternative was a mere futile protest. They were just letting off some steam at the spur of the moment.

Lynette was the only person thinking that it would be a success.

Sonia sneered while shaking her head. She then gave Toby a call to ask how he was going to settle the issue.

However, he might be busy with something else as he did not pick up the call. A helpless Sonia ended the call and decided to either attempt another call later or wait for him to return the call instead.

Needless to say, she had to get a change and prep for work, which was utmost urgent at the moment. She lifted a few bags of clothes back to her room.

It was 10.00AM when she was all ready, including getting her makeup done. Grabbing her bag and the trash, which was left from her breakfast, Sonia left Toby's residence and headed to Paradigm.

By the time she arrived at work, it was 10.55AM, which was five minutes before the meeting. She heaved a sigh of relief. Thank God I'm not late.

She alighted from the elevator, at which Rita was waiting for her. "Chairman Reed, you're here."

Sonia returned a smile. "Yup. Sorry for keeping you waiting."

Rita shook her head. "It's my duty. Here are the documents for the meeting."

She handed over the documents to Sonia, who flipped them open to take a glance at them before closing them up again. "Okay. I'll be on my way to the meeting. Please leave my bag at my office. Thank you."

"Alright, Chairman Reed."

Sonia strode to the meeting room with the files in hand, leaving her bag to Rita's care. It was not a significant meeting, but it was still important since it involved the company's strategic direction.

As the meeting went on, Asher kept glancing at Sonia menacingly like a venomous snake. It could easily give one chill from head to toe.

Even if Sonia was used to his sinister gaze on her, she could not shake off the uncomfortableness this time. The ominous aura from him loomed stronger than ever as if it was overflowing.

She cast her gaze onto the floor, knowing that he was definitely up to something. He would not stare at her like that unless he was planning to set her up.

As an afterthought, she straightened her back and put her guard up in case she fell for his trap. Strangely enough, he neither said anything nor did anything throughout the whole meeting.

Even after the meeting was over, he left the room straightaway with total ignorance toward her.

Words failed Sonia, for she had kept herself on her toes for nothing. Deeming Asher as a ticking timebomb, she was fully prepared to counter his advances and yet, he did nothing at all.

It was her monologue over nothing, but it was better than getting hurt. A wave of relief showered Sonia's tense body as she curled inward on her seat. Once she became relaxed, her body felt sore and tired after the long stiff.

Still, she kept vigilant deep down in her heart. She just couldn't ignore the way Asher looked at her during the meeting; it was vivid in her head.

Similar to a venomous snake, Asher always lurked in the bushes, biding his time to pounce on his prey.

So, his gaze was not that of a look toward a pill; he had something up his sleeves for sure. It was just that it was not the time for him to set it into motion yet.

That would not mean that he would give up on his plans, so she could not let her guard down just yet.

While she was absorbed in her musing, someone knocked on the door and broke her reverie. She looked back to see Rita standing by the door.

“Chairman Reed, your phone was ringing when I was in your office to leave the documents. I’ve brought it over for you. It’s President Fuller.” Rita entered the room to proffer the phone to Sonia. “I told him that you were in the middle of a meeting and that you’ll call him back after that.”

“Okay. Thanks.” Sonia took her phone while smiling.

Rita, who was expected to leave right away, suddenly bit her lower lip in a dilemma. Sensing something was off, Sonia put down her phone and asked concernedly, “What’s wrong? Did something happen?”

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“I think I saw Miss Daphne by the street when I was on my way to our partner’s company to pass over the documents,” Rita recounted.

“Who? Miss Daphne?” Sonia was shocked.

“Yes.” Rita nodded.

Sonia’s expression turned somber. “Rita, you gotta be kidding me. Why would Miss Daphne be here? Isn’t she pursuing her studies abroad? She shouldn’t be in the country. You must be mistaken.”

Rita bit her lower lip. “I thought I was seeing things too, but it’s impossible the more I think about it. I worked with her for such a long time; I know her very well, so I am sure about it. I didn’t see it wrongly. It was Miss Daphne. I called her number and she didn’t pick it up, so I called the company where she’s supposed to be working. And guess what, Chairman Reed?”

"She's not with them?" Sonia narrowed her eyes.

"Yes. They said they've recruited some fresh blood this year, but none of them is from our country. Miss Daphne lied; she isn't pursuing her studies abroad. That's why I'm certain that the person I saw was her."

"How could this be?" Sonia's brows crinkled.

Rita shook her head. "Beats me. No one knows why Miss Daphne would make up such a lie."

Sonia went silent for a moment. "Which street was it?"

Rita told Sonia the place she bumped into Daphne, after which Sonia nodded. "Got it. I know that you're worried about her and so you're telling me this. Don't worry. Leave it to me. I'll find out what she's up to."

"I believe in you, Chairman Reed." Rita bowed slightly before leaving the room.

After Rita left, Sonia kneaded her temples and dialed Toby's number. She decided to put Daphne's matter in the back of her head for now.

Everyone was selfish; although Daphne was her friend, her boyfriend's issue weighed more importance to her. Besides, it would not be too late for her to look into Daphne's matter after the call.

The call was soon answered as the man's mellifluous voice rang into her ear. "Done with your meeting?"

"Yep." She smiled.

On the other hand, Toby reclined in his chair with one hand holding the phone and the other twirling an expensive pen. One could see how relaxed he was from his posture.

"Did you call me about what's happening on the Internet?" He could see through her right away.

She smiled. "I knew that I can never hide it from you. Right, it's about that. Everyone's saying how cruel and cold-blooded you are. The ungrateful, young lad who doesn't let his teacher off the hook. Aren't you gonna speak up for yourself?"

Toby's gaze landed on the monitor before him as the corner of his lips curled into a sneer. He was aware of what was happening on the Internet.

"There's no need to explain to those idiots. Why not lay out the proofs and shut them up?" The tip of his pen lightly knocked on the cold surface of the desk.

Sonia smiled. "Yeah, you're right. So, are you going to expose what the Lore Family has done on the Internet? Including Professor Randall's matter?"

Toby replied implicitly, "If they've done it, they should've prepared themselves for the day when the lid is taken off. As for Professor Randall's matter, it is confirmed that Mr. Lore took part in it, but I won't expose it yet since there's no irrefutable evidence."

She nodded and added, "But people might think that you've gone too far. It's true. Lynette set me up last night, but I'm fine for now. Some netizens might keep clinging to this part and blaming you for being cruel when I'm all safe and sound."

A glint flashed across Toby's eyes. "Just let those fools be. We don't have to consider them. After all, I'm not revealing those for the fools. It's for the clever and rational people."

His words tickled her funny bones. "You have a point. So, are you—"

"President Fuller." Before she could finish her words, Tom knocked on the door and called Toby.

Toby looked at Tom. "What is it?"

Knowing that it was not a question for her, Sonia smiled. "Tom must be looking for you for something. Go on. I gotta prep for a meeting anyways. I clinched a deal with the mall's management last night and we'll be signing the contract at two in the afternoon. Gotta go now. Bye!"

It had been a long time since they shared a conversation, yet the call was going to end when they barely spoke to each other. Frankly speaking, Toby was quite displeased.

However, he was aware that Sonia was a career woman and that she did not wish to take up much of his time in such a situation. Hence, she chose to end the conversion.

Fine. We can talk at home later.

Toby bid goodbye before the call ended. Setting his phone aside, he stared icily at Tom, who was entering his office. There was a momentary pause in Tom's steps.

What's going on? President Fuller doesn't seem happy to see me. Have I done something wrong?

Right when he was all jittery with the speculations running in his head, Toby piped up coldly, "What is it?"

Smothering the doubts in him, Tom regained his composure and adjusted his spectacles. "President Fuller, we found an important clue regarding the Acree's accident."

"The Acree's?" Toby's eyes narrowed. "Didn't I tell you to stop with whatever has nothing to do with us? Is no one listening to my orders anymore?"

Tom hurriedly shook his head. "It's not like that, President Fuller. I did ask our men to stop right after you gave your orders yesterday. However, we found a SIM card when we retreated. They looked into it out of curiosity only to find out that it belongs to the driver who was taking revenge on the Acree Family. Most importantly, he has Lynette's number. He received some messages from her too."

"Lynette?" Toby was flabbergasted.

Quickly, Tom handed over the document. "Yes. It is Lynette Lore. Last night, we assumed that the car accident was not as simple as a result of the driver's revenge. We know that there's another party involved, but we didn't launch an investigation because it's none of our business. But based on our latest finding, the other party is none other than Lynette. Here's the contact history and message content between the both of them. Please take a look at it."

Toby perused the paper which listed a total of ten contacts. Each of them lasted for about five minutes long.

SIM cards did not leave records of a phone call; they could only know the number of contacts dialed and the time the calls were made, but not the content. Still, there was storage for messages.

Toby read the content and the wrinkle between his brows deepened. As Tom had reported, Lynette was the other party involved.

The funny thing was—they thought that it would be someone who had bad blood with the Acree Family, hence the help given to the driver to take revenge on the family.

Yet, reality proved them wrong. Lynette did not hold a grudge against that family; she was doing it for the mere reason to stop the Acree's from attending the party.