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Sonia chuckled. "What I'm trying to say is that the Triforce Enterprise is now burdened with debts. The company would have faced bankruptcy if it weren't for the support of its fixed assets. Even if the company isn't bankrupt now, it's on the verge of bankruptcy—just like Paradigm Co. was three months ago. I'm sure Triforce Enterprise doesn't have any working capital now, right? President Gray is probably acquiring loans just to maintain Triforce Enterprise's operations. How could he possibly allow you to take out ten million just to save Tina?"

Julia was speechless after she heard what Sonia said. She was probably the only person on Earth who knew how much Titus had struggled while begging others to loan him some money. However, he had been too arrogant and had offended too many people in the past, so many of the people within his circles were reluctant to lend him any money. After so much effort, he had only managed to gather about two billion. The sum of two billion barely made a dent after he threw it all into the stock market, and it was far from enough for Triforce Enterprise to stabilize their business.

Every penny they had was crucial at this point, and Titus would certainly lose his mind if he found out that Julia had taken out such a huge sum for Tina. He might not divorce Julia, but their relationship would definitely be ruined if Julia had done such a thing. Julia felt a surge of terror just at the thought of that outcome, and she began to tremble in fear.

Sonia laughed when she saw the look on Julia's face. "Well, it seems like you aren't that prepared to offer me any money, Mrs. Gray."

Julia's face was rather pale. "What do you need me to do for you to show Tina some mercy?" Before Julia arrived, she had received a call from the police informing her that Tina had signed her confession. Julia would no longer be able to bail Tina out, and she wouldn't be able to see Tina until they went to court. The officers had also told Julia that the evidence for Tina's crimes—harming and framing Sonia—were too strong, and that the court would probably already come to a decision after their first meeting. Tina might not even have a chance for an appeal.

When Julia asked Tina's lawyer if there was a way to save Tina, the lawyer's only idea was for Julia to come over and beg Sonia for help. If Sonia agreed not to proceed with the case, Tina would be safe. Julia therefore had to find a way to get Sonia to set Tina free.

However, Sonia's response felt like a bucket of ice water being poured over Julia's head. "I'll never let Tina go no matter what happens. She had harmed me in the past, but I didn't have any evidence then. Things are different now, so I'll have to make sure that she goes to jail this time!" Sonia uttered in an icy tone as she fixed her hair.

"You..." Julia widened her eyes as she pointed a shaky finger at Sonia. "You're just too evil!"

Rina blinked in confusion. Evil? Her head was held low as she gazed at Julia, who was standing in front of her. As much as I like my new mother, I have to say that she has some issues with her intellectual capacity. Even though I haven't studied much, I can tell that Tina was the one who harmed and framed Sonia. In that case, Tina's the evil one here, and Sonia is merely getting revenge with the use of the law. How does that make Sonia an evil person? Well, my new mother is pretty nice to me, so I won't voice out my opinions.

Sonia looked as if she had just heard the funniest joke in the world, and she let out a mocking laugh before she spoke. "No, no. Please don't say that, Mrs. Gray. I will never be as evil as your youngest daughter. She's capable of pushing others down the stairs, she managed to come up with a scheme to get someone to fall off a horse, she got a poisonous snake to bite someone, she tried to get someone raped, and she even got someone to splash acid on others! All her crimes are beyond evil! Her acts are worse than that of the devil."

Julia's face turned beet red after hearing Sonia's words, and she glanced away in a rather uneasy manner. "You... You're still well and alive now, aren't you?"

"Does that mean that I deserved all of that? Are you saying that I should forgive Tina because I'm fine now?" Sonia's expression turned cold. The corner of Julia's lips trembled a little. Although she didn't say anything, the look on her face made it clear that what Sonia had said was precisely what she meant.

Sonia shook her head as she knew that there was no point in having their conversation any longer. One couldn't wake a person who was only feigning sleep, after all. Sonia pulled her phone out and dialed Titus's number in front of Julia. "President Gray. It's me, Sonia."

Julia's eyes were bulging wide as she screamed, "What are you doing?"

Sonia ignored her and continued to speak. "Your wife is here, and she's offering me ten million for me to set Tina free."

"What?" Titus shot to his feet on the other end of the call. His face was eerily dark. Ten million? Julia sure is a generous woman! I just applied for a loan from the bank, and I just got rejected. I'm on the verge of bursting out in anger, and that woman—Julia Ramsay—is offering ten million to save my useless daughter?! Doesn't Julia understand how much ten million means to Triforce Enterprise right now?

Titus was shivering with rage as he spoke. "Where is Julia Ramsay right now, Sonia?" He had used Julia's full name. Sonia's lips curled into a faint smile as she looked at Julia's terrified expression. "She's right in front of me. Why don't you speak to her?" With that said, Sonia pressed on the loudspeaker button before placing her phone in front of Julia.

"I want you to f*cking come home right now!" Titus shouted in a furious and cold voice.

"Honey, I—"

"I don't want to hear you talk. I'm not going to be as nice if I don't see you back in half an hour!" He interrupted her without any hesitation, and he ended the call after finishing his sentence.

Julia's entire being was shaking—even Rina, who had been standing behind her, was shocked by Titus's call.

"Do you have anything else to say, Mrs. Gray?" Sonia took her phone back.

Julia stood up. Her eyes were emotionless as she stared at Sonia—she had returned to her usual arrogant, icy and hostile self. "Just you wait. We're definitely going to find a way to save Tina. Let's go, Rina." Julia held onto Rina's hand and strode toward the exit.

It didn't take long for Tom to find out about the news of Julia paying Sonia a visit. Tom knocked on the door before entering the president's office. "According to our men from Paradigm Co., Mrs. Gray and Miss Rina just visited Miss Reed, President Fuller."

"What?" Toby frowned. "Were they there because of Tina?"

"Yes. However, it seems like things didn't go the way Mrs. Gray wanted them to. She had looked rather pale when she left the office," Tom uttered in a scornful tone. A similar smirk appeared on Toby's face. "Nothing will go Mrs. Gray's way if the person she's dealing with is Sonia."

The person who most desperately hoped for Tina to be convicted was probably Sonia, after all. It was an idiotic move for Julia to seek help from Sonia. "By the way, do you have any updates on the research that I got you to do on Rina?" Toby drummed his fingers on the table as he asked.

Tom pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. "I did find some stuff."

"Some?" Toby pressed his lips together—he clearly wasn't satisfied with the other man's answer.

Tom nodded before responding in a rather helpless tone. "Yeah, some. I only found some because a part of Rina's past documents had been removed by

someone. It took me a lot of time to recover some of the information. Rina used to be known

as Taylor Carey, and she lived in a village. She belonged to a family who valued males more than females until Zane brought her over to Seafield."

"Zane?" Toby's pupils shrank at the mention of Zane. So, Sonia isn't the only person involved in Rina's return. Zane is part of it as well. What exactly are Sonia and Zane trying to do?

Tom seemed to have read Toby's mind, for he continued his speech in a stern tone. "Mr. Coleman and Miss Reed seem to be plotting something because I realized something else. This woman, Taylor, isn't actually Rina. Mr. Coleman had placed fake DNA samples in all of the major hospitals and accrediting bodies. That way, no matter how many times Mr. and Mrs. Gray attempt to run tests on Taylor, results would indicate that she is their daughter. I'm sure Miss Reed is aware of this—she wouldn't have passed the necklace to Taylor otherwise."

Toby kept quiet and knitted his brows as he sank into deep thought. Soon, he realized what Zane and Sonia had in common—they both saw the Grays as their largest enemy. However, they can't directly attack Triforce Enterprise due to the national policies in place. In order to get Triforce Enterprise bankrupt, they would have to think of other ways to attack them. Their best strategy would be to get hold of some of Triforce Enterprise's secret information. However, it's practically impossible for them to do such a thing unless they have someone planted in the company.

Could Taylor be a spy that Sonia and Zane had planted in the Gray Family? Toby wondered.

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Toby stopped drumming his fingers on the table. The more he thought about it, the more possible his hypothesis seemed. There'd be no other way to explain why they came up with a fake 'Rina'; they couldn't have done it just to comfort Titus and Julia, right?

At that thought, Toby looked up at Tom. "I want you to delete everything that you've found. Apart from that, I also want you to erase all traces in places that Taylor has ever been. Most importantly, I want you to ensure that all of the DNA

samples that Zane has left in the hospitals and accrediting bodies are still present."

Although Zane had done his work on covering up Taylor's identity, there was still a chance that someone would suspect that Taylor wasn't actually Rina. If Tom's research was able to indicate that Rina wasn't actually who she claimed to be, then other people would be able to do the same thing. All Toby could do was to ensure that he helped Sonia and Zane conceal Taylor's identity—at least others wouldn't be able to easily find out about the truth. Tom naturally understood Toby's intentions, so he nodded and went off to get it done without any protests.

In the next few days, the news of Sonia and Tina began to die down on the Internet—only a few media sites continued to report about it. They weren't celebrities after all, so the hype surrounding them died down after a while. One day, Sonia and Carl were discussing a trip to watch a show in Norfolk when Sonia's phone began to ring. It was a call from the police.

"Hello." Sonia picked the call up.

"Miss Reed, the date for Tina's court hearing has been set. It will be at 2.00PM tomorrow. You're required to be present as the plaintiff for tomorrow's case," the officer said.

Sonia nodded her head solemnly. "Alright. I'll be there on time." She lowered her phone after she ended the call.

Carl gazed at her. "What is it, Sonia?"

"Tina's court hearing has been fixed at 2.00PM tomorrow." Sonia chucked her phone onto her desk as she spoke.

A hint of darkness flashed in Carl's gaze before he put on a smile. "That's great. I'll go with you tomorrow."

"Okay," Sonia said with a nod.

"President Reed." Daphne knocked on the door before she walked in. Both Sonia and Carl shifted their focus onto her. "What is it?" Sonia asked.

Daphne stood outside the door without entering. "I've already made an appointment for the overseas hospital that you told me to contact. They asked when you're available to go there."

"What hospital is this, Sonia? Are you sick?" Carl's expression changed a little as he hastily scanned Sonia with his eyes.

Sonia smiled. "Don't worry, I'm fine. I got Daphne to make an appointment for me with a gynecologist." She turned back to Daphne. "I got it. I'm planning to go there this Saturday night." It was Wednesday then, and Sonia was planning to watch Carl's show at Norfolk on Friday. I'll leave the country to have the surgery

on Saturday, and then I'll come back on Sunday. I have just enough time for everything, she thought.

"Alright. I'll get back to them now." Daphne nodded before she shut the door and walked off. Carl lowered his gaze to look at Sonia's belly. "Sonia, are you going overseas to do a checkup, or..."

"I'm going overseas to abort the child." Sonia rubbed her belly as she responded to Carl with a blank expression. "After what Tina tried to make Tim do to me, I'm a little reluctant to have the surgery in the country, so I decided to do it overseas. I had already obtained my visa a while ago, but I haven't had the chance to do it as I was too busy. I'm three months pregnant now, and I can't delay it any longer. It'll be harder to get an abortion if I wait anymore." That was only one of the reasons, of course. Sonia's other reason was that she was afraid she would develop feelings for the baby. She was worried that she wouldn't have the heart to remove the fetus once her motherly instincts kicked in.

Carl's pupils shrank a little after he heard what Sonia had to say. A hint of regret flashed in his eyes, but it quickly disappeared as he lowered his gaze and forced himself to put on a kind smile. "I'll go with you, then."

"It's fine. Didn't you say that you have to attend a recording for some entertainment program the day after your show at Norfolk? I'm going on a Saturday, so you wouldn't have time to go with me. You should focus on your work. Charles will be with me." Sonia patted Carl's shoulder.

Carl feigned disappointment by letting out a long sigh. "Okay then." Sonia giggled when she saw the look on his face—he looked like a child who couldn't get his favorite candy. She then pulled her drawer open to make him a cup of peppermint tea. "Don't get all pouty. Drink this. It's your favorite drink."

When Carl saw the fresh-smelling peppermint tea in front of him, his gaze dimmed for a second before he spread his lips into a smile. "Thanks, Sonia. You know me the best." He devoured the tea with a pleasant look on his face. However, he was the only one who knew how unhappy he was at that moment—he hated drinking peppermint tea. The one who likes peppermint tea is Toby, not me! But I can't tell Sonia any of this. I can't even imagine how she'd react if she found out that I'm mimicking Toby. It'll probably change her impression of me. I'd lose my mind if she ever perceived me as some freak!

After finishing the peppermint tea in his cup, Carl excused himself from the office. Sonia intended to send him out, but he stopped her from doing so. Once he walked out of her office and shut the door behind him, the smile on his face gradually faded and was replaced by an icy, heartless expression.

He walked to the elevator and pressed on the button to go down before he stepped to the side, where there was a potted bonsai plant. He bent forward, opened his mouth and stuck a finger down his throat. The same blank and emotionless expression remained on his face even as he made himself gag. He threw up all of the peppermint tea that he had just ingested.

After letting all of it out, he finally heaved a sigh as he straightened his back and pulled a handkerchief out of his pocket. He was about to wipe his lips when he heard a female voice from behind him. "You just came out of President Reed's office, right? How would President Reed feel if she found out that you just vomited all of the drinks you had in her office?" the woman uttered in a spiteful tone.

Carl's facial muscles twitched a little as he immediately turned around to give the woman a threatening glare. The woman appeared shocked for a moment, but she quickly calmed herself down before letting out a whistle. "Yo, you scared me with that glare! This is the real you, isn't it?" she said with a laugh.

"I'll break your neck if you tell Sonia anything." Carl tightened his grip on his handkerchief as he hissed at the woman.

Rebecca twirled her hair playfully. "I'm terrified," she uttered sarcastically. The corner of Carl's lips twitched in annoyance. Terror? I've never seen a hint of terror in this woman's eyes. Well, she's someone who has ended human lives with her own hands, so she's probably not afraid of my threats.

At that moment, Carl felt rather frustrated. He wasn't in the mood to fool around with her, so he turned to walk toward the elevator.

"Hold on." Rebecca grabbed his arm. "I can promise not to tell President Reed anything, but I want a few strands of your hair."

"No way!" Carl squinted as he instantly rejected her request.

She laughed. "I'll tell Sonia about it, then."

"Do what you want." He shot her a scornful glare. "

Even if you did so, I can just tell her that I vomited because I wasn't feeling well. We'll see who she trusts more—you or me

"

"But..." Rebecca was speechless for a moment. Of course Sonia would trust him more. He met Sonia before I did.

"Fine. Let's just say that I miscalculated my acts this time. But I'll still make sure to get some of your hair." Rebecca stopped fooling around and spoke in a more serious tone. "You've already rejected me twice. Even if one didn't believe that their birth father had another partner, one would generally feel curious and would agree to run tests and get evidence. However, judging by how insistent you are, I can't help but feel like you're avoiding something."

"Is that so? What would I be avoiding?" Carl clenched his fists.

The corner of Rebecca's lips curled upward when she noticed his subtle action. "You're trying to avoid the truth—that you aren't actually Ronald's son. You know that you're Gordon's son, don't you?"

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Carl's pupils shrank. "You—"

"It seems like my guess was right. You are the young master indeed," Rebecca said with a smile. Carl's face contorted, and all hints of courteousness were gone from his expression. "Were you trying to trick me?"

"Not entirely." Rebecca wagged a finger in his face. "I've always suspected that you're the master's son and that you know the truth yourself. Since I don't have any evidence, I had no choice but to talk in such a manner to see how you would respond to me. I can't believe my suspicions were spot on! Furthermore, when I mentioned the master's name, I saw the hatred seeping through your gaze.

This tells me that you probably have memories of leaving the Hayes Family, am I right?" How else could he know that he's the master's son, and why else would he try so hard to avoid me? There can only be one answer—that he has all the memories of the past. He probably isn't willing to go back to that place, Rebecca thought.

Carl pressed his lips together without uttering a word.

"I'll assume you're admitting it since you're not saying anything," Rebecca continued with a sigh. "Regardless, I still need a strand of your hair. I need to send a DNA test back to Westsanshire." Although Rebecca was certain that the man before her was the young master, she still had to get a DNA test done just to be sure.

With that thought, Rebecca reached her hand toward Carl's head. Hatred flashed in Carl's eyes as he abruptly sent his fist toward Rebecca's face. The look in her eyes changed as she hastily defended herself. Both of them began to fight along the passageway. Although Carl was a big-sized man trained in Taekwondo and grappling, he didn't stand a chance against Rebecca.

Rebecca had received strict training ever since she was young, and she was extremely familiar with all the deadliest techniques in martial arts. It only took her a few moves to lock Carl in her arms. She turned him around and shoved him up against the wall. Dissatisfaction and anger were written all over Carl's face as

he tried to wrestle his way out of her grip without success. Rebecca slapped his face playfully. "You were still in school while I was out killing people, kiddo. You'll never beat me in a fight. I'll take some of your hair now."

She pushed Carl's face aside and reached up to pluck a few strands of hair from his head. Carl let out a hiss of pain before he shot Rebecca a deadly glare. She remained unfazed as she shoved him aside. "Alright. I finally got the hair that I need."

"I'm not going to let you go so easily." Carl clenched his fists as he spoke in an icy, heartless voice. Rebecca merely laughed in response. "Sure. I'll be waiting for you. If you return to the Hayes Family and get your revenge under the name of the young master, then I promise I won't do anything to resist your attempts. How does that sound?"

"I'll still be able to defeat you without Lucius Hayes's name." Carl straightened his clothes as he spoke. I might not be able to defeat her physically, but I'm sure I can outsmart her.

Just then, Rebecca's expression turned stern. "I'm not in the mood to fool around with you any longer. I'm telling you that you need to return to the Hayes Residence immediately. My father told me that Declan and his men arrived at Seafield yesterday—Declan probably knows your whereabouts. He's going to hunt you down soon, and both you and the people around you will get into trouble then." She paused for a moment as she stared directly into Carl's eyes. "If you have memories of the past, then I'm sure you remember the sort of person Declan is. He'll do anything to gain power over the Hayes Family, and the first step is to get rid of you, the official heir of the family. If he isn't able to defeat you, he'll probably target the people that you care about the most so that you'll suffer for the rest of your life. I can tell that you care for President Reed—would you want her to become Declan's target?"

Carl's face had never been darker. He didn't wish for such a thing, of course—he would never let anyone harm Sonia! Rebecca let out a pleasant chuckle as she seemed to have read Carl's mind. "I know you hate the master, but you should go back for the sake of President Reed and your mother. Your mother is the master's wife, and you are the official son of the Hayes Family—don't forget that. Why should the Hayes Family's illegitimate sons be the ones who get the inheritance? Think about it." After picking up the documents that she had dropped on the floor, Rebecca turned and strode toward the president's office.

Rebecca had been on the same floor earlier, but she had been discussing some work matters in Daphne's office. She was supposed to get Sonia's signature for some documents once she was done with her meeting with Daphne, but she hadn't expected to bump into Carl outside Sonia's office. President Reed is probably getting impatient since I spent so much time talking to Carl, Rebecca thought.

Carl curled his fists as he bore his eyes into Rebecca's back. All he could think about then was what she had said earlier. For the sake of President Reed and my mother... Is it really time for me to go back to the Hayes Family?

Sonia went to Fuller Group the next morning as she received a message to have a meeting there. The meeting was to discuss the upcoming tests for the alternative energy technology that the company had been working on. They were at the final stage of test runs, and the technology would be available for most of the major factories once the test runs were completed successfully. Therefore, it was an important meeting that required the attendance of all parties involved.

Once Sonia parked her car, she strolled toward the elevator in the parking lot. To her luck, the elevator was just one floor below her. The doors opened just moments after she pressed the button to head up. She stepped into the elevator, and she heard a rather anxious voice behind her right before the elevator doors shut. "Wait up!"

Sonia instinctively reached her hand out to stop the elevator doors from closing. As the doors reopened, Tom's face appeared. "Thank you, Miss Reed," he uttered with a smile. Sonia was rather surprised to see him, but she quickly calmed herself down. It made sense for her to bump into Toby's assistant—she was in Toby's territory, after all.

"No worries." Sonia nodded in response. However, Tom continued to press down on the elevator's open button while glancing outside, as if he were expecting someone. Sonia bit onto her lower lip as she could already guess who the person was. Only one person in the entire Fuller Group could keep Tom waiting—his boss, Toby.

Indeed, Toby's figure appeared just a few seconds later. His eyes seemed to light up a little when he noticed Sonia in the elevator. "Good morning!" he greeted while parting his long legs to step into the elevator.

"Morning." Sonia took two steps to the side to keep her distance from him.

Toby couldn't help but frown when he noticed how much she was trying to avoid him. "Don't you think this is such a coincidence?"

"What?" Sonia turned to look at the man. Toby, however, fixed his gaze on the elevator doors even as he spoke. "We seem to bump into each other every time we're involved in a meeting related to alternative energy technology."

Sonia widened her eyes. He's right! Tom was the only one in the elevator who had to fight the urge to roll his eyes. A coincidence? What nonsense! The past few times might have been a coincidence, but President Fuller planned it all out this time. He waited in the car simply because

he knew that Miss Reed would be here for the meeting. He only staged the coincidence by walking to the elevator after Miss Reed got out

of her car. Hah! It's all staged!

"Today's the day that Tina is going to court, right?" Toby asked out of nowhere. He turned to gaze at Sonia as she nodded. "Yeah." She wasn't surprised to learn

that Toby had found out about the court's dates since it was posted all over the Internet.

"

Congratulations

. You've finally managed to get her arrested and do justice to yourself." Toby stuck his hands into his pockets as he spoke. Sonia rolled her eyes at him. "I would've had her arrested a long time ago if you hadn't protected her for so long," she hissed.

Toby froze for a moment. "I'm sorry," he muttered as he lowered his head. He hadn't intended to cause any troubles to Sonia in the past, but he was indeed responsible for it.

"Forget it. It's all in the past, and you helped me quite a bit as well. I'm not about to hold the past against you, so you don't have to apologize for anything." The elevator let out a loud ding as Sonia finished her words. They had arrived at the floor of the meeting room, but Sonia stood still and waited for Toby to step out first. He was the host of the meeting, after all.

Toby quickly understood her intentions. He stepped out of the elevator, and Sonia followed behind him. Once she walked out of the elevator, she realized that Toby had stopped to wait for her. "Regardless, I hope that you'll believe me when I say that whatever I did for Tina wasn't out of my own free will." Complicated emotions filled Toby's eyes as he gazed at Sonia.

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Sonia froze when she first heard what he said. It took her a while to process it, then felt the urge to laugh right after that. He didn't do it willingly, huh? Was someone controlling his actions? She didn't take his words seriously, and she simply assumed that he was trying to claim innocence. She pointed at her watch as she changed the topic. "It's about time to start the meeting, President Fuller."

Once Toby heard what she said, he knew that she didn't believe him. "Let's go," he uttered with a sigh. Both of them walked toward the meeting room without speaking to each other anymore. Tom tagged along behind them and shook his head as he glanced at their backs. Tina's the real reason the two of them are in this state right now!

The meeting officially began as Toby took the floor and explained the use and abuse of the alternative energy technology. He fully captured everyone's attention. All along, Sonia had been proactive in learning about energy technology—she even sneaked into university classes every now and then. Because of her efforts, she no longer found herself lost and confused as she had been during the first meeting.

Two hours later, the meeting came to an end. Toby got to his feet. "I need Sonia to stay for a while. The rest of you can leave." Sonia had been packing her stuff when she heard his words, and her actions came to a halt as she looked up at Toby. She didn't understand why he wanted her to stay back. Everyone was just as curious, but no one had the guts to question him. They merely gazed at the duo thoughtfully before they walked out of the meeting room.

Sonia could hear some of the people mumbling to each other as they walked out of the room. "Why do you think President Fuller got President Reed to stay back? They're not committing adultery, are they?"

The corner of Sonia's lips twitched a little. Adultery? These guys must have holes in their brains. I can't believe they can come up with such ideas! She massaged her temples as she watched Toby walking toward her. "Why did you get me to stay back, President Fuller?"

"It's nothing much." Toby stopped in front of her before he glanced down at her notebook on the table. "Did you understand everything I said?"

Sonia followed his gaze and quickly understood what he meant. She pulled her hand away from her notebook. "I understood some parts of it, I guess. I still need to do my research on the other parts." Otherwise, I wouldn't even be able to understand the operations of the alternative energy technology when we have actual field trips to the factories! All the other presidents would laugh at me then.

"Which parts did you not understand? I'll explain it to you now," Toby offered.

"What?" Sonia blinked puzzledly.

A hint of amusement surfaced in Toby's gaze. "What? Take a seat."

Sonia finally understood the reason Toby got her to stay behind. He wants to teach me the parts that I didn't understand. She bit her lip. "You don't have to do that. I can go home and—"

"The field trip to the factory is tomorrow. Do you think you'll have enough time if you go home to do your research today? Furthermore, a lot of the data that you have isn't updated, and it wouldn't match with the research done in my lab. There's no point for you to read those reports!" Toby uttered as he looked at her.

Sonia parted her lips to say something, but no words came out of her mouth. He's right. The field of alternative energy technology is still in its infancy stage, and new information appears every day. The past data can't keep up with the

development of this field, so I'm sure the data I have is different from the recent advancements. I don't think it'd work if I went home to do research on my own. I guess I'll have to ask him for a favor.

"I understand now. Thank you so much, President Fuller!" Sonia bowed. Toby was about to get her to stand up when he saw her bosom under her low-cut collar. His gaze darkened as he gulped and shifted his focus away. "It's fine. It's for the sake of our partnership, so you don't have to thank me. Also, you shouldn't bow when you're dressed in this type of shirt—men, especially. You shouldn't bow to men," he uttered in a hoarse voice.

"What?" Sonia straightened herself puzzledly before she lowered her head to look at her own shirt. She understood what Toby meant immediately.

She had worn a rather loose-fitting, V-necked knitted sweater to match her trench coat. The knitted sweater was pretty, but its collar would hang loosely whenever she leaned forward. Furthermore, anyone who was taller than her would be able to see the view under her shirt if they lowered their heads. Sonia hastily pressed her hand against her neckline when she realized that Toby had seen what was under it. Her face turned so red—even the tips of her ears were the color of tomatoes. She felt rather angry at that moment, but she knew that she was in no position to criticize Toby for anything.

She was the one who had chosen to wear this sweater, and she was the one who had decided to bow. He hadn't meant to peep on her. Furthermore, he had reminded her not to bow to others if she wore this sweater in the future, which was kind of him. Her body might have been exposed to other, more perverted people otherwise.

The air around them turned cold and awkward as the both of them were silent for a while. Eventually, Toby cleared his throat and began to speak. "Let's start now so that we can get this done. You need to go to court, don't you?"

He was clearly trying to ease the tense atmosphere, and Sonia naturally played along with him. "Yes, of course," she uttered with a nod. She buttoned the top of her trench coat as she sat down and opened her notebook once more. Toby pulled a chair over and rested an arm on the back of her chair. They were seated close to each other, and it looked almost as if Toby had his arm around her shoulder.

Sonia didn't have the time or the mental capacity to realize the man's subtle intentions—she was too focused on the contents of her notebook. Toby was glad that she hadn't noticed anything. Otherwise, I might never get the chance to be so close to her. He lowered his gaze to conceal the faint sadness that had formed in his eyes upon that thought.

All of a sudden, Sonia's phone began to ring, interrupting Toby's explanation. He frowned as he was a little displeased. Who's the idiot that chose to call at such a time? He looked toward Sonia's phone to see the word 'Charles' on her screen.

She swiped the green button across the screen to pick the call up. "Hi, Charles."

"Are you going to Norfolk this weekend, baby?" Charles asked once she picked the call up.

"Yeah," Sonia uttered with a nod. Toby, who was sitting right beside her, naturally heard the contents of her phone call. He knitted his brows. Why is she going to Norfolk? Right then, Charles asked the same question.

Sonia didn't bother to hide anything. "It's for Carl's fashion show. He invited me to watch it. But how did you know that I'm going to Norfolk? I'm sure I haven't told you anything about it."

"Daphne was the one who told me. I went to Paradigm Co. to collect some documents, and I bumped into Daphne while she was making reservations for your hotel in Norfolk," Charles explained.

Sonia raised her chin a little as she gained clarity over the situation. "I see."

"When will you be heading over, baby?" Charles asked again.

"This Friday," she replied.

Friday... Toby's gaze flickered as he seemed to recall something. On the other end of the line, Charles narrowed his eyes for a moment. "Okay, I'll free up some time to go there with yo

u, then! I need to keep an eye on Carl. What if he secretly kidnaps you?!" He wasn't kidding when he said those words. In fact, he wa

s certain that Carl was capable of doing such a thing.

Sonia shook her head and chuckled as she had no idea what was going on in Charles's mind. "What are you talking about? I'm not a kid. How could he kidnap me? Alright, I'll talk to you later. I'm in a meeting now. Bye."

"Wait!" Charles called anxiously.

Sonia put the phone against her ear once more. "What is it?"

"Let's have dinner tonight. Tina's going to court today, and I think this is worth celebrating!" Charles uttered in a cheerful tone. Sonia nodded in agreement. "Okay. You can decide where to eat. We can ask Carl to come along."

"It's a plan!" Charles cheered.

After her call ended, Sonia lowered her phone and turned to the man beside her before giving him a bashful smile. "I'm sorry for wasting your time."

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Toby lowered his gaze. "It's fine. Let's go on." Sonia placed her phone aside as she nodded. Nearly an hour had passed when Toby finished explaining the details to Sonia. Sonia gave him a rare smile as she shut her notebook. "Thank you, President Fuller. I think I've understood most of it. I'll just need to do some reading on my own once I get home tonight."

"That's great. We'll be having a tour of the factory at 9.00AM tomorrow. Don't be late," Toby uttered as he got to his feet.

Right then, Tom opened the doors to the meeting room and pushed a trolley in. There were tons of delicious-looking dishes placed on it, and the mouth-watering scent quickly filled the room. Sonia hugged her notebook against her chest. "I'll make a move now since it's time for your lunch, President Fuller. Goodbye."

"Hold on." Toby held onto her arm. "Let's have a meal together."

"What?" Sonia frowned.

"You came to Fuller Group for a meeting. As the boss of the company, it's only right for me to buy you a meal. Furthermore, this is just lunch between business partners—you wouldn't reject my treat, would you?" His eyes glistened as he spoke.

The corner of Sonia's lips twitched as she stared at him. If I reject his offer now, he'll think that I don't value my company's partnership with him. Is that what he's trying to imply here? She rubbed her forehead as she sat back down in her seat. "I got it. Thank you for your kind service, President Fuller."

Toby relaxed the muscles between his brows. "It's nothing grand. I only ordered a few random dishes; I hope it suits your preference." He returned to his seat as well.

Tom served the dishes while fighting the urge to roll his eyes. What does he mean when he says that he just ordered a few random dishes? He picked all of Miss Reed's favorite foods! Well, I feel rather bad for President Fuller because he needs to use their partnership to get Miss Reed to share a meal with him.

"Here you go." Toby handed Sonia some cutleries.

"Thank you," she replied.

"No worries. Try it out," Toby uttered as he pointed at the dishes on the table and gestured for her to start eating. Sonia politely scooped some of the food from one of the dishes in front of her.

"How is it?" he asked.

She swallowed her food before looking into his eyes. "It's really good," she said after seeing the anticipation in his eyes. Toby secretly let out a sigh of relief before he scooped some for himself. "You should eat more, then."

These dishes weren't available in the hotel's menu, but recipes that originated from Sonia's mother's hometown. The chef at the hotel had never prepared such dishes, and Toby had to order the chef to learn the recipes on the spot. He was worried that Sonia wouldn't be too pleased with the outcome of the dishes. However, she seemed to enjoy the food.

Tom shook his head thoughtfully as he noticed how Toby's tense shoulders gradually relaxed. President Fuller might be an incredible and influential person in the eyes of others, but he's just a careful and sensitive man in front of Miss Reed. I bet the rest of the world would be shocked to see this side of him.

Throughout the meal, Toby barely took any food for himself. He spent most of his time watching Sonia as she ate. A sense of satisfaction filled his insides as he watched her munching on her food. There were multiple times when he had the urge to scoop more food for her, but he stopped himself from doing so as he thought that she would reject his offers.

After finishing her meal, Sonia took a look at her watch. It was nearly 1.00PM, so she excused herself. Toby didn't stop her as he knew that she had to go to court. "Let me send you downstairs," he offered.

Sonia didn't reject him as she wiped her mouth. She knew that he would insist on sending her down even if she said no. Once they got to the parking lot, Sonia pulled her car keys out. She was about to unlock her car when she heard a quavering voice from behind her. "Toby!"

Toby frowned as he turned around. Sonia turned just in time to see Julia and Rina. She raised her eyebrows puzzledly.

Julia stopped weeping the moment she saw Sonia. "What are you doing here?" she asked while glaring at Sonia. Sonia crossed her arms and was about to speak when Toby stepped sideways to stand in front of her. He gave Julia a cold stare. "This is my company, and Sonia is my guest. Her presence here is none of your business, Mrs. Gray. I think I should be the one asking you this question—what are you doing here?"

Julia hadn't expected Toby to speak up for Sonia. "I-I'm here to speak to you," she stuttered.

"Me?" Toby narrowed his eyes. "What is it?"

"It's about Tina." Julia reached her hand out to hold onto his arm. Before she managed to touch him, Toby stepped aside to avoid her hand, dragging Sonia along with him as he did so. After missing her target, Julia stumbled forward and nearly fell onto the ground. Fortunately, Rina held onto her in time—Julia would have embarrassed herself otherwise.

"Are you okay, Mom?" Rina patted Julia on the back while speaking to her in a caring voice.

Toby shifted his gaze to look at Rina. So, this is Taylor, huh?

"I'm fine." Julia's voice was trembling as she shook her head—she was still stunned by the whole situation. Once she calmed down a little, she turned to give Toby a critical glare. She looked as if she was blaming him for how he was treating her.

Sonia had to stifle her laugh. Some people are just so oblivious! They don't know where they stand at all. Julia isn't even Toby's future mother-in-law anymore. Yet, she's still treating him as if she's his mother-in-law. Does she expect Toby to be as polite to her as he was in the past?

As these thoughts ran through Sonia's mind, she heard Toby addressing Julia in an icy tone. "What did you come here to tell me, Mrs. Gray?"

Julia shuddered when she caught on to the hatred and annoyance in his voice. Something clicked in her brain at that moment, and she realized that things were no longer the same anymore. I can't use my role as his future mother-in-law to force him into anything now! Julia clenched her fists as she glared at Toby with her bloodshot eyes. "I want you to save Tina, Toby!"

A smirk appeared on Sonia's face. Julia visited me and asked me not to press charges against Tina. Now, she's here to ask for Toby's help. Perfect! I'd like to see if he'll agree to this! Sonia tilted her head to glance at Toby.

Toby could feel the woman's stare from behind him, and it only took him seconds to figure out the reason she was staring at him. This time, I can promise Sonia that I won't disappoint her!

"You want me to save Tina, huh?" Toby looked down to fix his shirt collar. No one could see the expression on his face then.

"Yes," Julia uttered with a nod. "You need to save her, Toby." Julia had been going around and begging others for the past few days. She had hoped for someone to agree to save Tina, but none of her targets had agreed to her request. She was filled with hatred and anger for these people. All of those people were once as loyal to her as a dog was to its owner, but they all hid away from her once they knew that she was in need. I can't believe I used to say good things about those people in front of Titus and Toby! They're all ungrateful brats!

However, there was no use in Julia being angry. It was the day of Tina's court hearing, and it was Julia's final chance to save her daughter. Once the court

hearing was over, no one would be able to save Tina. Julia therefore had no choice but to go against Titus's orders to stay away from Toby. She ca

me over as she felt like he was her last sliver of hope.

"How am I supposed to save her?" Toby lowered his arms as he eyed Julia emo

tionlessly. Sonia knitted her brows from her spot behind him. What's this? Is he thinking of saving her?

Rina, who had been quiet the entire time, lifted her head and stared at Toby after she heard what he said. Didn't Daddy say that Mr. Fuller doesn't love Tina at all? I heard that Mr. Fuller would never save Tina because he hates her for pretending to be Miss Reed. Daddy wouldn't have stopped Mommy from coming over to visit Mr. Fuller otherwise. But now, it looks like Daddy was wrong. Mr. Fuller sounds like he's planning to save Tina!

Rina bit her bottom lip as resentment welled up in her chest. Is Mr. Fuller blind? What's so great about Tina? Why does he want to save her?

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Julia's eyes lit up with joy as she assumed that Toby was considering ways to save Tina. She quickly stole a glance at Sonia, who was standing behind Toby, before flashing her a look of victory. Look, even if you refuse to free Tina, someone else is going to save her, Julia said with her eyes. Sonia felt like she was about to throw up.

When Toby noticed what Julia was doing, his gaze turned harder than before. However, Julia didn't realize anything as she turned to address him in an emotional voice. "It's really easy. You just need to talk to the police officers, Toby. I'm sure they'll listen to you because of your status and position in society. If that doesn't work, you can get the Colemans to help out. They're an extremely powerful family, so the police will definitely free Tina if they tell the police to do so."

"Hah!" Toby let out a sarcastic chuckle. "You think too highly of me. Sure, I might be able to save Tina, but why would I do that?"

All the excitement in Julia's expression faded off once she heard his words. "W-What do you mean?"

Even Sonia eyed the man in front of her in a confused manner. What? Isn't he going to save Tina? Rina's eyes lit up as she held her hands together excitedly. I thought this man was going to save Tina, but I hadn't expected the tables to turn so suddenly! Did he just change his mind?!

"It means that I'm not going to save her!" Toby said in a scornful tone as he smirked at Julia. Julia widened her eyes in response. "Are you not going to save Tina? But you just said—"

"Since when did I say anything?" Toby interrupted her impatiently. "I just asked you how I was supposed to save her. I never said anything about actually saving her."

Julia was too stunned to say anything at that point. He's right. He was just asking a question, but he didn't say that he wanted to save Tina. I was the one who had jumped to a conclusion on my own.

Sonia's spirits were lifted when she saw the look of devastation on Julia's face. Any anger she held toward Toby had dissipated after this incident. Earlier, Sonia had decided that she would use all her might to go against Toby if he had agreed to save Tina. She figured that she would be able to bring him down even if she failed to destroy the Gray Family. I'm glad that his brain is actually functioning, and I'm pleased that he didn't agree to save Tina.

Toby could sense the sharp gaze of the woman behind him gradually softening into a calm one. He knew that she was no longer angry at that point, and he turned around to look at her. "I won't disappoint you in the future," he uttered in a gentle voice.

Sonia raised an eyebrow. "I'm not related to you in any way, President Fuller. You don't need to promise me anything," she uttered calmly.

He gave her a sincere gaze. "Regardless of whether we are related to one another or not, I just wanted to let you know that I'll always be on your side from now on. This is my promise."

Before Sonia could respond to Toby, Julia stepped forward to speak up first. She couldn't hold it in any longer. "Toby, is she the one who's telling you to do this? Did she tell you not to save Tina?!" she asked as she pointed at Sonia.

Sonia let out a frustrated scoff. What has this got to do with me? I've never told Toby to do such a thing. Toby knitted his brows together as he shot Julia a hateful glare. "This has got nothing to do with Sonia. It's all my own intentions. Do you think I'd save someone who tried—multiple times—to harm my lover?"

When Sonia heard the word 'lover', she subconsciously turned to look away from Toby. Toby noticed her actions from the corner of his eyes, and his gaze darkened a little as he let out a sigh in his heart. She still doesn't trust my feelings for her.

Julia parted and shut her lips a few times before she responded in a rather weak voice. "E-Even if Tina did any of that, it was only because she was too in love with you!"

"She pretended to be the woman I love because she loves me, huh? She hurt my lover because she loves me! What sort of logic is that?!" Toby's expression hardened as he barked at the woman before him.

Julia's entire being trembled when she saw the fury in his eyes. "Tina might be wrong, but... Sonia is fine, isn't she? Furthermore, you were with Tina for months—don't you have any feelings toward her?"

"Let me ask you a question, Mrs. Gray. Let's assume you fell in love with another man who isn't Titus. Then, Titus finds out about this, and he tries to attack the man you love. Would you suddenly develop feelings for Titus?" Toby shot her an inquisitive look.

"Of course not—" Julia stopped mid-sentence before she turned to look at Toby with her face flushed. She saw the unmistakable sarcasm written all over Toby's face, and she felt the urge to dig a hole for herself because of how embarrassed she felt. Sonia, on the other hand, was close to clapping her hands and cheering. Toby's question was a killer! If Julia loved someone else, and Titus attacked Julia's lover the way Tina did, Julia would never have feelings for Titus! The only feeling she'd have is probably hatred! Toby's question managed to tear down Julia's pretentious mask.

Toby pressed his lips together as he stared at Julia's embarrassed and speechless face. "Look. Even you know the answer to that question. Why would you think that I'd still have feelings for Tina, then? Please leave. I'm not going to save Tina!" he hissed in a cold voice, ordering for the woman to leave.

"Toby..." Julia was starting to get anxious.

Sonia could tell that Julia was about to say something else, so she quickly gave Rina a secret look. Rina nodded dutifully before she reached forward to hold onto Julia's arm. "It's fine if Mr. Fuller refuses to help us, Mom. Let's think of other ways. We shouldn't waste any more time here. Tina's court case is starting soon."

Although Rina and Sonia had been pretty subtle with their acts of communication, Toby caught them signaling each other. His gaze flickered as he realized that his guess had been right. Rina is really working for Sonia and Zane.

Once Julia heard Rina saying that they were running out of time, she quickly clutched onto Rina's arm. "What time is it? What time is it now?"

"Calm down. Let me take a look." Rina pulled her phone out. This reminded Sonia of her own appointment, and she unlocked her car and got into the vehicle when she realized that she couldn't stay for much longer. Toby stood on his spot and watched as Sonia drove off. He only looked away after the car disappeared into

the distance. If he didn't have an extremely important meeting for a collaboration, he would have offered to go along with her.

Toby turned and prepared to head toward the elevator. All of a sudden, he heard Julia's shrill voice coming from behind. "Where is your red mole? Rina? Where's your mole?"

A red mole? Toby's footsteps came to a halt when he overheard their conversation. He turned to glance at the mother and daughter duo curiously.

Rina felt pain shooting up her arm as Julia's grip was tight. She tried to pull her hand away while speaking in a careful tone. "W-What red mole are you talking about, Mom?"

"The red mole on your wrist. You were born with it. Why did it disappear?" Julia attempted to grab onto Rina's hand once more.

Rina quickly hid her hand behind her back, panic written all over her face. There was a red mole on Rina's hand, huh? Why didn't Miss Reed and Mr. Coleman tell me anything?

Toby narrowed his eyes from a distance away. Based on his own recollection, he knew that Tina had the same red mole on her wrist. Why would Rina have the exact same mole on hers? Could red moles

be inherited in the Gray Family?

"Hold your hand out for me to take a look,

Rina. Why isn't your red mole there?" Julia urged anxiously. Rina's eyes looked around frantically before she held her hand out. "Mom... I used to have a red mole, but..."

"But?" Julia stared at her.

Rina bit on her lip before she started to cry. "But my adoptive father burned my hand. When I was ten years old, he went out gambling and came back angry after he lost his money. He released all his anger on me, and he used his cigarette butt to burn off the red mole on my wrist. He said that people usually have black moles and that my red one was a curse to his wealth…"

Julia gave Rina a tight hug after hearing Rina's story. The older woman began to cry as well. "My poor Rina! You've suffered so much. Those evil b*stards deserve to die a horrible death!"

Both mother and daughter bawled their eyes out. Meanwhile, Toby stared at Rina with a rather glazed look in his eyes.

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She's a pretty quick-witted woman! She appeared flustered just moments ago, yet it only took her a short while to calm down. Furthermore, she managed to find a reason for the missing red mole in less than ten seconds. Her reason makes sense, and it didn't evoke any further questions from Julia's end.

Can Sonia and Zane have full control over a woman as smart as her? If this woman decides to betray them, they might end up in a horrible situation! At that thought, Toby retrieved his phone and dialed Tom's number as he walked toward the elevator.

"President Fuller." Tom's voice came from the other end of the line. Toby pressed his lips together before he spoke in a stern voice. "I want you to get someone to monitor Taylor secretly. I want to be informed whenever she does anything out of the ordinary."

He simply couldn't allow a woman like Taylor to threaten Sonia. If someone like Taylor comes up with a nasty idea, I'll have to destroy her before she tries to do anything. Tom didn't understand Toby's intentions, but he nodded in agreement. "I got it, President Fuller. Do you need anything else?"

"That's all." Toby ended the call.

Meanwhile, Sonia drove over to the court. Carl and Charles were already waiting for her at the entrance, and they walked over together once they saw her getting out of the car. "Sonia," Carl greeted. "Baby!" Charles cried.

"How long have you guys been here?" Sonia asked as she shut her car door.

"We've been here for a while, but we couldn't go in since it isn't time yet. We had no choice but to wait outside." Carl handed her a cup of milk tea that he had bought earlier.

"Thanks, Carl." Sonia took the cup from him.

"You're welcome." Carl gave her a warm smile. Charles pointed toward the crowd opposite them. "Those reporters are staring at you, darling."

Sonia sipped on her milk tea as she glanced in the direction that he was pointing. There were reporters snapping photos of her. If it weren't for the security officers standing outside the court, these reporters would have probably rushed

over once I arrived, huh? This trial will determine Tina's sentence, so the reporters are probably curious to hear my thoughts on it.

"Just ignore them, Sonia. You shouldn't let them affect your mood." Carl only took a brief glance in the direction of the reporters.

Sonia nodded. "I'm not going to let them bother me. But aren't you worried that they might recognize you?" Although Carl was wearing a cap and a mask, his height and body shape was distinct enough to attract looks from others. If the reporters stared for a while more, they might even recognize him.

Carl shrugged. "I don't mind if they happen to recognize me."

"It might affect your work," Sonia replied. Carl's gaze darkened a little. "It's fine. I'm not sure if I'm going to continue pursuing a career in this field, anyway."

"What do you mean?" Sonia and Charles exchanged glances before they both looked at him. "You aren't thinking of leaving the industry, are you?" Charles placed an arm around Carl's shoulder. Carl shook Charles' arm off before he gave Sonia a smile. "I do have the thought of leaving the industry, but I'm still in the midst of contemplating my decision."

"This is sudden." Sonia frowned. "Isn't it your dream to become an internationally-known top male model? Did something happen, Carl?" How else could one explain his sudden wish to give up on his dreams? Sonia wondered.

Carl's eyes glistened as he spoke. "It's nothing. I just feel drained, and I just feel like taking a break. That's all."

"Is that so?" Sonia narrowed her eyes. She clearly didn't believe him.

Carl waved her off with a smile. "Alright, now. Let's not talk about this. The doors are open so we should go in." Sonia turned to look at the doors leading into the court and realized that Carl was right. "Okay. Let's go," she said with a nod. The three of them, along with some other individuals who got seats in the court, made their way in.

Titus and Julia arrived just a while later. Sonia saw the burning hatred in both their eyes as she looked in their direction. She wasn't afraid of them at all—she even spread her lips into a smirk. The look on her face only made Titus and Julia more furious than ever.

There was a live stream for the entire trial, so people on the Internet were all able to witness the process. Soon enough, Tina was brought up onto the stand. She had been kept in the detention center for the past few days, and she hadn't got much food or sleep. On top of that, she was suffocated by the stress she had been facing due to this incident. All of these factors contributed to her significant loss in weight. If it weren't for Tina's paler skin tone, Sonia might have thought that the person she was looking at was Taylor. Right now, Tina looks exactly like how Taylor did when she first came out of the village. She looks malnourished and like she would topple if she was struck by the wind.

Upon seeing the drastic change in her daughter's appearance, Julia held her hand over her mouth and began to sob. Although Titus had felt a huge sense of resentment toward Tina throughout this period of time, he no longer had the energy to hate her then. He merely shook his head helplessly.

Smack! Once the judge pounded the gavel, the trial officially began. The entire trial was rather pointless since everyone had seen proof of Tina attempting to harm Sonia. The trial was, therefore, more of a procedure than anything else. Charles recalled something as he watched Tina arguing with Sonia's lawyer. "Baby, I have bad news that I think I should tell you," he turned and whispered to Sonia.

"What is it?" Sonia shifted her gaze toward him. Carl had an idea of what Charles was about to say. "I think he wants to tell you what the lawyer told us before you arrived," Carl uttered with an icy look in his eyes.

"What did the lawyer say?" Sonia's expression turned serious when she saw the stern looks on both their faces. Charles pinched the bridge of his nose before he spoke. "Well, before you arrived, I spoke to your lawyer for a while. He told us that Tina's sentence might be less severe than what we expected—she might not even be sent to jail. The chances are that the court might just give her a probation order."

"All she might get is a probation order?" Sonia tightened her fists—she was clearly displeased by this news. What Sonia intended was for Tina to be sentenced to jail, not to receive some probation order. Charles understood Sonia's wishes, which was why he told her that he had bad news.

"That's right. A probation order. It's a fact that Tina attempted to harm you, but the lawyer said that you didn't encounter any actual harm throughout the process. Her crime of intentionally harming someone is therefore turned into a crime of attempted harm, which reduces the severity of her punishment," Charles explained.

"What nonsense is that?!" Sonia's face was flushed with rage.

Charles sighed. "I know, right? Furthermore, the lawyer said that the outcome would be the same even if she had tried to frame you. The main reason for this is her health. She would receive a sentence out of prison even if she was sentenced, and this naturally translates into a probation order. That's why the lawyer said that Tina would end up receiving a probation order."

Sonia bit her lip without commenting any further. A probation order? This is so ironic! All along, my intentions have been to send Tina to jail. I thought that I finally succeeded this time around, yet they are telling me that all she is probably going to get is a probation order! What could possibly be more disappointing than this? Sonia's heart felt heavy, and her aura was no longer as strong as before. Carl a

nd Charles both understood the reason for this.

They were both dissatisfied by the outcome, but they knew that it was how their nation functioned. Even if a mother were to kill her own daughter, she would only be sentenced to jail for up to five years. The outcome of court trials was, oftentimes, less than ideal.

Eventually, the trial came to an end. The result of the trial was as the lawyer had predicted—five years of probation. Within the five years, Tina wasn't allowed to leave Seafield, and she would have to wear fetters that would keep her under police surveillance. If Tina attempted to commit any crime, she would be sent to jail.

However, if Tina played by the rules, she would be safe. She might even get the chance to reduce her sentence if she was a good citizen. In other words, Tina remained free despite being constantly watched by the police. She would go on with her life as usual—she simply wouldn't be able to do anything illegal. Sonia couldn't accept this outcome at all. She wanted to appeal the court's decision, but her lawyer stopped her from doing so.

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The lawyer told Sonia that she could appeal the court's decision, but there would be no point since the judges would still maintain their initial adjudication. "I'm so mad!" Charles slammed his fist against the seat. Carl didn't say much and simply lowered his head as if he was thinking about something.

Sonia watched as Tina was brought out of the courtroom, Titus and Julia following behind her. Titus and Julia seemed to notice Sonia's gaze as they both turned around to flash her looks of victory. Julia, in particular, looked as if she wanted to walk right up to Sonia's face just to laugh at her.

In the past few days, Julia had been running around seeking help since she had assumed that her daughter would have to go to jail. She had suffered countless rejections and eye-rolls. Just an hour ago, Sonia and Toby had looked down upon her as if she were nothing but trash. She was furious whenever she thought about it. However, she felt much better after the court case was over. It was Sonia's turn to get angry then. At that thought, Julia gave Tina a fond stroke on the head before she let out a hearty laugh while looking in Sonia's direction.

Sonia clenched her fists and gave Julia a cold glare before she shifted her gaze to Tina. Tina's head was hung low, and Sonia couldn't see her expression. However, Sonia guessed that Tina was probably celebrating silently.

After the Gray Family left, Sonia stayed back as she still had to attend William's trial. His charge was more serious than Tina's charge of attempted harm toward Sonia. After all, Sonia never got hurt as a result of Tina's attempts to harm her. William's case was different since he had directly splashed acid on Sonia, and he ended up receiving a three-year sentence. The rest of the netizens who had sent wreaths and knives received their relevant punishments as well—some were arrested while others received milder punishments.

On the other hand, the marketing accounts and media outlets were in greater trouble as they had done more than just to defame Sonia. The outcomes of their cases were still unknown as they had committed other crimes as well. Most of them had to deal with charges that were independent of Sonia's case. Sonia didn't bother much about these people because it was good enough for her to know that they would eventually face the consequences that they deserved.

As she walked out of the court, she raised her head to look at the sky. It was a cloudy day, and it seemed like it was about to rain. Charles looked up as well. "I often hear people saying that the skies look especially clear after they win a court case. We won, yet..." he muttered in a sarcastic tone.

"Are you okay, Sonia?" Carl gazed at Sonia with concern in his eyes. Sonia forced a smile. "I'm fine. The outcome might not have been what I hoped for, but I'm sure Tina won't dare to do anything else for now. At least she'll have to live in the shadows for the upcoming days. I guess the results aren't that bad."

Both Charles and Carl exchanged glances. They could tell that Sonia was forcing herself to feel better, but they didn't expose her act. "Let's forget about the celebration we were supposed to have tonight," Charles said after a few seconds of silence. Carl nodded without protesting.

Sonia was about to insist on proceeding with the celebration, but she couldn't seem to utter the words in the end. I thought that I wouldn't be too bothered by the results, but it seems like it has impacted me quite a bit. If I didn't care about the trial's outcome, I would have had the mood to go on with our celebration, right?

Three of them walked to the car park in silence. A group of reporters rushed toward them once they arrived at their car. "Miss Reed, what are your thoughts on the judge's decision for Tina's case?" one asked.

"Yeah, Miss Reed. Let us know if you're satisfied or not!" another asked.

Sonia simply stared at the ground with an icy look on her face and completely ignored the reporters. Carl and Charles were furious, and they shooed the reporters away while shielding Sonia and helping her get in the car. It took them a great deal of effort to finally free themselves from the swarm of reporters. Once they got in the car, they sped out of the area.

On the way back, Charles saw reporters chasing after them in the rearview mirror. He smacked his palm against the steering wheel angrily. "F*ck! These reporters are like pests! They always touch on the most sensitive topics!" he grunted.

"Alright. That's enough," Carl muttered in a deep voice when he saw the dejected woman sitting with her eyes closed in the back seat. Charles noticed how he might have said the wrong words, and he kept his mouth sealed after stealing a glance at Sonia. The atmosphere in the car seemed especially gloomy after the three of them stopped talking.

Meanwhile, Toby stepped out of the meeting room and sent his collaborating partners off after their meeting at Fuller Group. As Toby strode toward his office, he saw Tom waiting for him outside. Tom wore a rather confused expression on his face as he spoke. "Tina's trial is over, President Fuller."

"How many years did she get?" Toby's eyes lit up upon hearing Tom's words.

"She got a five-year probation." Tom pushed his glasses up his nose as he spoke in a rather disappointed tone.

Toby was about to let himself into the office, but he spun around immediately after Tom finished speaking. "What did you just say? Five-year probation?!"

"Yes. Tina didn't cause any direct harm to Miss Reed and her own injuries are rather serious, so the court decided to put her on probation. She also has to pay a sum of one million for destroying Miss Reed's reputation, and another 5 million for Paradigm Co.'s losses," Tom replied.

Toby was so furious, all he could do was laugh. "I can't believe she got off with a five-year probation and 6 million!"

"There's nothing that can be done—it's just the way our country works. I contacted our legal department after watching the live stream, and they told me the same thing." Tom sighed.

Toby pursed his lips. After a while, he narrowed his eyes dangerously. "I want you to watch Tina closely. We can find a chance to set up a trap for Tina." Since Tina didn't get prosecuted this time, I'll find a way to do something that'll send her to jail.

Tom had been working with Toby for years, and he quickly understood what his boss meant. His glasses glowed as they reflected the light above. "Are you trying to get Tina to do something illegal during her probation period?"

"That's right." Toby nodded.

Tom's eyes lit up. "I got it. I'll find a chance to lay a trap for her."

"Okay. You can leave now," Toby uttered as he gestured for Tom to go. After Tom left, Toby pulled his phone out and dialed Sonia's number. He knew that Sonia wanted Tina to be sentenced to jail, and he was certain that Sonia would be extremely disappointed with the trial's outcome.

Sonia picked the call up soon after it began ringing. "Is anything the matter, President Fuller?" Her voice sounded rather weak. She pressed her phone against her shoulder as she jabbed the password for her condominium's entrance. However, she kept pressing the wrong combination as she wasn't in the right headspace. She got more frustrated after a few wrong tries.

Toby's voice softened when he heard her frustration on the other end of the line. "I heard about the court's decision."

"Oh. Are you calling to laugh at me?" Sonia bent forward and tried to focus on punching the numbers on the keypad. She finally got it right. Opening the door, she kicked her shoes off without putting on her indoor slippers. She walked barefoot into her living hall, then threw herself onto the couch—she was too tired to do anything else.

On

the other end of the call, Toby knitted his eyebrows together after hearing what she said. "What? Why would you think I'm calling to laugh at you?"

"What else could it be? Are you calling to show your concern?" Sonia scoffed.

"Yes. I know you must be in a bad mood now, so—" Toby replied.

"Stop! You can stop now." Sonia stared at the ceiling listlessly. "I don't need you to care. I'm way past that now." In the past, he had never been around when she needed him the most. Even if he was present, he simply pretended not to realize her needs. She no longer needed him at this point. Furthermore, she had tons of people that cared for her then. Does it matter if he cares for me?

Toby felt his chest tightening upon hearing her words. He felt like he was suffocating. His fingers curled around his phone as guilt filled his eyes. "I'm sorry, Sonia. I—"

"You don't need to be sorry. It's all over now. Do you need anything else? If that's all you wanted to say, then I'll end the call now." Sonia massaged her temples as her head started to hurt. For some reason, her head felt extremely heavy. She pressed her palm against her forehead, but she didn't have a fever.

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Although Toby had intended to say something else, he stopped when he noticed Sonia's weak and shaky voice. "Are you okay, Sonia?" he asked instead.

"I'm fine." Sonia shut her eyes as her voice grew fainter. Toby's expression darkened. Is she trying to tell me that she's okay even when she sounds like that? "Where are you now?" he asked again.

Sonia no longer responded to him this time. Her phone slid out of her hand and fell onto the carpet with a loud thud. With her head hanging sideways on the couch, she looked as if she had fallen asleep. Toby could hear the phone falling to the ground from his end of the call, and his heart sank immediately. He shouted Sonia's name a few more times, but she didn't respond at all.

Toby had a feeling that something had happened to Sonia, so he ended the call and strode out of his office with a grim look on his face. He headed straight for the technical maintenance department. "Please help me check the location of this signal." Toby handed his phone to one of the programmers while speaking in a demanding voice.

The programmer had never met Toby before, and he was shocked by his boss's powerful aura. His hands were trembling as he took the phone and did what Toby told him to do. A few minutes later, the programmer tapped on the enter key before he got the answer Toby wanted. "P-President Fuller, this signal was last active at Bayside Residence."

Bayside Residence! Toby's expression lit up a little after he obtained Sonia's whereabouts. He hastily took his phone and left the technical maintenance department after thanking them. About 30 minutes later, he arrived at Sonia's condominium unit with a locksmith behind him. Since Sonia went silent before she ended the call, it was likely that she had fainted in her apartment. If that was the case, Toby figured that she wouldn't be able to open the door for him.

"Open it." Toby got the locksmith to hurry. The locksmith nodded and began to pull his tools out to work on the lock. Soon enough, the locksmith managed to decode the password to the keypad lock. Toby pulled his wallet out and took out a wad of cash before shoving it into the locksmith's hands. He then hurried off into the condominium. The locksmith didn't even get the chance to tell Toby that Toby had overpaid him by a lot. In the end, the locksmith walked off with pockets full of money and a pleased grin on his face. Oh, if only I get more clients who are as generous as him!

Meanwhile, Toby saw Sonia's unconscious figure lying on the couch once he stepped foot into the unit. He ran over and knelt down to shake her gently. "Wake up, Sonia!" She didn't respond at all. Toby felt her forehead and noticed that she didn't have a fever. Judging by her looks, it didn't look like she was in a deep slumber either. If she wasn't sick or sleeping, then there had to be some other reason.

Toby didn't have the time to think of the possible reasons and simply lifted Sonia into his arms before bringing her out of the unit.

When they got to the hospital, Toby bumped into Tim at the elevator. Tim had just finished sending another patient off when he saw Toby carrying Sonia in his arms. "What happened?" Tim froze before he quickly reacted to the situation.

"I don't know. She just fainted." Toby couldn't conceal the fear and worry in his gaze as he looked at the woman in his arms. "Please save her!"

"Get me a bed!" Tim shouted to one of the nurses at the front desk. Once the bed arrived, Toby lowered Sonia onto it, and a nurse came up to do some basic check-ups on Sonia. The rest of the staff members pushed the wheeled bed in the direction of the emergency room. Toby followed closely beside them, fixing his gaze on Sonia until the emergency room's doors were shut in front of him.

At the same time, Julia walked into one of the VIP wards with a thermos in her hands. She glanced at Tina, who was seated on the bed with her head hanging low. "Why don't I tell you some good news, Tina?" Julia asked the motionless young girl as she put the thermos onto the table.

Tina still didn't respond to Julia. It was almost as if she was a rag doll who had lost her soul—her face was devoid of all emotions. Julia felt both sorry and angry for her daughter. She was sorry that her daughter had ended up in such a state. Tina hadn't uttered a single word ever since she left the court, and all she had done was sit around in silence. It made Julia wonder if her daughter had developed depression or social anxiety after the incident.

One way or another, all of it was Sonia's fault. Julia's anger was fully directed at Sonia. She was furious because Sonia hadn't had to suffer while Tina suffered such a great deal!

However, after seeing what she saw earlier, Julia no longer felt as angry as before. Maybe Tina will feel better after I tell her what I saw. Julia took Tina into her arms as she spoke in a light-hearted voice. "Tina, while I was on the way back to the ward, I saw Sonia being sent to the emergency room."

When Tina heard Julia's words, she finally responded a little. Her body twitched and she shifted in bed. Julia was so pleased that she nearly cried. "That's great, Tina. You're finally moving. You scared me."

"W-What happened to Sonia, Mom?" Tina looked up at Julia as she parted her lips to speak. Her voice was especially hoarse and unpleasant, and she sounded like it was her first time speaking in centuries. Julia was more pleased than ever. Since Tina can still talk, then I guess she doesn't have some sort of mental disorder. That's great.

"I don't know what happened to her. All I saw was her being pushed into the emergency room. Based on what I saw, it seems like her condition is pretty serious. Perhaps she ended up that way because she couldn't accept the court's decision for you to be on probation. In my opinion, she totally deserves it. It's karma! It's her fault that she couldn't be a little more forgiving toward you." Julia stuck her lips out as she spoke in a bratty tone. She no longer had the elegance of a rich man's wife. At that moment, she sounded more like Jean.

Perhaps her elegance had gone down the drain along with Triforce Enterprise's reputation and business.

"Is that so..." Tina's expression didn't seem to change much after she heard Julia. One couldn't tell if she was happy or not. Julia stared at her daughter, feeling like her daughter was a completely different person after coming out of the detention center. Tina seemed more enigmatic after this incident.

. . .

Toby waited outside the emergency room for close to an hour before the doors opened. He shot to his feet and rushed to Tim. "How's Sonia?"

Tim pulled his mask down to reveal his rather pale expression. Toby felt his heart sinking as he clenched his fists. "What is it?"

"She was poisoned!" Tim replied.

"What? Poisoned?" Toby froze for a moment before he reached a hand to grab Tim's collar. "How could she have been poisoned? What sort of poison was it?" Toby had assumed that Sonia had a medical condition, but he hadn't expected the truth to be worse. I can't believe she was poisoned!

"The poison is in the form of a chemical toxicant. It seems like she consumed it orally. The poison doesn't do much damage to her body, and it only makes her really weak for a period of time. But..." Tim paused for a moment.

"But what?" Toby clenched his jaw. He had heaved a sigh of relief after hearing that the poison didn't do much damage to Sonia, but he hadn't expected Tim to continue speaking. Is there more to this?! Toby could tell that it wasn't good news because of the grim look on Tim's face.

Tim pushed his glasses up his nose and looked into Toby's eyes. "But... this form of poison is lethal toward the child in her belly. If she's lucky, h

er baby will survive albeit with some deformities. The worst-case scenario would be a stillborn baby!"

"What?!" Toby's pupils shrank, the news sending shock waves through him. Deformities... Stillborn...

"Are you saying that this poison was used to target her baby?" Toby glared at Tim with a cold look on his face.

Tim nodded. "That's right. It doesn't do much harm to the mother, but it harms the baby. The answer is clear—the person who administered this poison was trying to kill Sonia's baby without hurting her. Furthermore, I checked on the baby just now, and it has already started showing some deformities. In other words, that means that Sonia has been consuming the poison for at least half a month now!"

Rage burned across Toby's chest as he cracked his knuckles. The air around him felt eerily cold. Who is it? Who's the one who is trying to harm my baby?

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Tim removed his glasses and wiped his lenses. He could tell what was going on in Toby's mind because he was thinking the same thing. "Someone who only wishes to harm Sonia's baby without harming Sonia... This has to be someone who really idolizes Sonia. This person cannot accept the fact that Sonia is bearing the child of another man. Perhaps you can filter through your suspects with this criterion in mind."

After finishing his words, Tim put his glasses back on and walked off to arrange for Sonia to be moved to the ward. Tim only cared about Sonia's wellbeing—the rest was none of his business. He wasn't too concerned with Sonia's child either. Let Toby worry about it on his own, Tim thought.

Toby remained planted in his spot even after Tim left. He was waiting for Sonia to come out. His fists were balled up, and his expression steely and unreadable. The person who gave her the poison is someone who idolizes her. Based on my knowledge, there are only three people who really idolize Sonia—Charles, Carl, and Zane! Could it be one of them?

Toby kept his head lowered, but there seemed to be an entire hailstorm erupting in his gaze. He mentally ran through all the information he had on the three men, but he still couldn't determine the culprit after doing so. I don't care who it is. All I know is that I'm not going to let the culprit get away with this!

At that thought, Toby heard the sound of wheels moving closer to him. He suppressed his rage and took a step closer to the emergency room's doors. The medical staff pushed Sonia out, and Toby hurried to stand by the side of the bed. "Is she okay?"

The nurse holding the IV drip was the one who spoke. "She's okay, but her baby isn't doing as well..."

Toby tightened his grip around the bars on the bed. He knew the issue—Tim had told him that the fetus was already deformed. In other words, he knew that they could no longer keep the child. Upon that realization, Toby felt a tight, painful sensation in his chest, as if countless sharp needles were stabbing him all at once. It hurt so much that he could barely breathe.

All along, Toby had intended to find the right time to tell Sonia about the baby. He didn't expect Sonia to forgive him and remarry him, but he had hoped that they would have a child that would serve as the common link between them. He had hoped that Sonia would one day forgive him for the sake of their child. He had even imagined a day when three of them would stay together as one happy family. Unfortunately, all of his bubbles burst after the incident.

Tim was adjusting Sonia's IV drip when Toby went in. Toby walked up to Tim with a determined look on his face. "The child... Is there any way to save it?"

Tim flicked a finger against the tube of the IV drip. "Are you asking if there's a chance for the child to grow up as usual?"

Toby nodded as that was what he meant, while Tim smirked. "Of course not. It might have been possible if you came a week earlier, but the cells in the embryo have already mutated to a point where regular medical interventions won't be able to do much."

"So, the child..." Toby muttered.

"Will have to be aborted!" Tim finished his sentence. "Unless you'd like Sonia to give birth to a monster without arms or legs, or one without a nose or eyes."

"That's not a monster!" Toby howled as he glared at Tim with bloodshot eyes.

Tim merely shrugged. "I'm sorry. My bad. I shouldn't have called your child a monster in front of you. However, I don't think I'm wrong. You're the child's father, so of course you wouldn't think your child was a monster. However, what about the rest of society? You don't have the power to control what others think."

"How did you know that the baby in Sonia's belly belongs to me?" Toby eyed Tim suspiciously.

Tim pushed his glasses up his nose. "It's not hard to tell. Everything is written on your face. Why would you get so emotional if this child wasn't yours? Anyway, you and Sonia can discuss and decide on a date for the surgery. My suggestion is for the surgery to be done within this week. The child is already deformed, so there's no need for it to continue developing. The earlier she gets this over with, the easier it'll be for her to heal from the surgery." With that said, Tim took the patient's files and walked out of the room. The rest of the medical staff tagged along behind him.

Toby and Sonia were the only people left in the ward. He walked over and sat down by the side of the bed before he reached out and held onto Sonia's hand—the hand that had an IV drip connected to it. He gazed at her pale face for a long while without saying anything.

Meanwhile, Tim had returned to his own office when someone knocked on his door. "Come in." Tim placed Sonia's report aside as he shouted toward the door.

Julia walked in from outside. "Are you done with your work, Tim?"

Tim's eyes glinted for a brief moment before he nodded. "Yeah. Is anything the matter, Mrs. Gray?" he asked.

"Well, Tina hasn't been herself ever since she came out of the detention center. She doesn't move around much and rarely talks or laughs. I even suspected that she had developed some mental disorders until she uttered a few words to me earlier." Julia sighed.

Tim smirked in response to this. "You're overthinking it, Mrs. Gray. The cells on Tina's face are three times the amount of the usual person's cells. Anyone else with her experience might develop social anxiety, but I'm sure she wouldn't struggle with the same issue. It's her talent, really." In other words, Tim was implying that Tina was too thick-faced and shameless to develop social anxiety.

However, Julia didn't understand the meaning behind his words. When she heard him talking about cells, she assumed he was referring to Tina's biology and didn't think too much of it. Instead, she let out a light-hearted chuckle. "Is that so? That's good, then."

Tim let out a rather sarcastic laugh. This time, Julia realized the hint of mockery in his laugh, and she was puzzled by it. Is he laughing at me? She gazed up to observe Tim's expression, but Tim had returned to his usual, calm look, and Julia couldn't tell what he was thinking at all. She even began to wonder if she was the one who misunderstood him. I think I just misinterpreted his actions. Tim is really close to Tina and I'm Tina's mom, so I don't think he'd laugh at me.

With that thought in mind, Julia felt better about herself. "Tim, although you said that Tina isn't prone to getting social anxiety, I still feel rather worried after seeing the state that she's in now. I recall how you once traveled overseas to study psychology when you were trying to help Tina wake up. Could you visit Tina and perhaps counsel her a little?"

"I can pour her glass of water, but I doubt she'd be pleased to see me." Tim crossed his arms in front of his chest. Julia had no idea about the fallout between Tim and Tina, so she assumed that Tim was just cracking a joke.

"That's impossible! Tina only has her father, sister, and me by her side now. She doesn't have any other friends. Even the brat from the Stryder Family had a fight with Tina. Her friend from the Stone Family still gets along with her, but the friend is still in the detention center, so you're Tina's only friend for now. Tina would be so pleased to see you. She'd never say no to seeing you!" Julia exclaimed.

Tim smiled. "If that's the case, I guess I should go visit her, then. I hope you won't regret your decision. Come on." He stuck his hands into his white coat before taking the lead to step out of his office.

A few minutes later, they arrived at Tina's ward. The doors to the ward were opened at the exact same time that they arrived, and Rina walked out from inside while ru

bbing her eyes.

Julia held onto Rina's arms once she saw her. "What happened, Rina?" Julia asked.

"I'm fine. It's Tina. I was trying to comfort her, but she didn't want to see me and chased me out of the room," Rina uttered between sobs.

Julia frowned. "What's wrong with Tina? She was fine before this, and she agreed to get along with you. Why is she doing this now..." Julia muttered.

"It's okay, Mom. It's not her fault—it's mine. I'm the one who embarrassed Tina. I guess that's why she hates me. I didn't wish for any of this to happen. I'm sure I wouldn't be the same person if I had grown up at home with you guys." Tears trickled down Rina's eyes as she looked at Julia.