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She was terrified, but if she wanted to save herself, she had to remain calm. No one was there to save her now. She had to depend on herself.

After she remained quiet for a while, the man stood up, turned around, and said to another guy behind him, "Turn on the radio, let her listen to it!"

The radio was turned on, and Sarah heard Charles's voice, "Mr. Roberts, are these the results of your investigation?"

"Yes!" Another voice responded.

Charles didn't respond, but the sound of turning paper was heard. Then, the sound of a pen being thrown on the table was heard. He seemed to be very stressed.

Mr. Roberts asked, "Is there something you don't like?"

Charles's voice sounded weak and disappointing, "It never occurred to me that my wife... doesn't love me. Really... I really didn't expect this from her!"

"Mr. Thomas?"

After a long silence, Charles sighed, "I'm really disappointed. I've been so good to her and even decided to leave with her. How could she do this!"

The leader switched the radio off. Sarah was shocked by what she had heard and questioned in a loud voice, "What did you say to Charles? What did he investigate?"

Sarah didn't understand what had made Charles doubt her again. Did someone say anything to him? It was not easy to trust people, but if someone used so-called pieces of evidence against her, he would doubt her indiscriminately.

The man sneered back, "Hum, we don't need to tell you. This is just to prove that your man doesn't love you. If he loved you, he wouldn't doubt you. Sarah, are you ready to give up?"

Sarah was furious. Had they done all this to make her give up on her marriage? They had gone through too many misunderstandings throughout their short marriage but had managed to overcome them all so far.

Perhaps the man read her thoughts as he laughed ironically, "Don't think that you're safe this time. You and Charles don't trust each other, how can you live like this? Not to mention that we are well prepared this time, Charles will never forgive you! You have two choices, one is to take your money and leave and never come back, which I think is your best choice. The other is to continue fighting against us. But what will you get by fighting us? If you're smart, you will choose the first one as soon as possible!"

"How much money can you give me?" Sarah asked.

The man raised one finger and said proudly, "One million, enough for you to live a good life. Even if you work for two hundred years, you can't earn that much!"

To his surprise, Sarah burst out in laughter.

"What are you laughing at?" he asked.

"Well, I laugh because if I was that greedy, I would have taken the money and left when his mom offered it to me before marrying Charles. Why would I have waited this long? Not to mention that one million is much less than what she offered me!"

"You mean, you are choosing the second option?" The man asked, surprised, his tone filled with threats.

"Well, I'm not choosing the first one nor the second!" Sarah mocked back.

The guy seemed to become irritated. Under the light, his expression looked very sinister. He laughed out.

"You think you have another choice? I'm done playing nice. If you refuse to choose the first, I will not hold myself back on you!" While looking at her in a mad and defiant look, he ordered. "Take her away!"

Two guys came up to untie the rope and took her away.

Sarah struggled and shouted, "What are you going to do? Where are you taking me to? Let me go! Let me go!"

But without responding to her, they took her out of the abandoned warehouse, but there seemed to be no one outside. Sarah still shouted loudly, not knowing where they would take her to or if they were going to kill her. "Help, help, he... lp..." As they covered her mouth to stop her from screaming.

The man scolded her angrily, pushed her into a car, tied her up tightly, and stuffed her mouth so she wouldn't be able to yell for help or escape. After completely immobilizing her, they finally drove off.

Sarah had no idea of where they were taking her or what they would do to her. All she knew was that the road ahead was unusual and hard. Would Charles come to rescue her, or was he not trusting her again?

Sarah was taken to a small grove beside a suburban highway. Among the tall and dense pine trees, lush grass made it easy to hide. The kidnappers tied her hands and feet and stuffed a cloth in her mouth to prevent her from making a sound; placing her hillside, she had a full view downhill of the road.

Sarah didn't know what they were planning next. Thinking of what they had told her earlier, were they going to kill her here? Panicked, she sobbed and struggled to get free.

But the leader put a knife to her neck and said in a mocking voice. "Come on, stop struggling, or I will kill you now!"

Sarah looked at the knife pressed against her neck and dared not to move. She didn't know what to do. Her entire body was trembling in fear.

After waiting like that for some time, they heard some voices suddenly approaching the mountain road. One of her captors whispered. "Boss, here they are, here they are!"

The leader held Sarah more tightly, threatening her with his knife to keep silent and not to move.

Afraid of what he may do to her, Sarah followed his command, knowing that she had no way out. She looked toward the road, wondering to whom the voices from the street belonged. To her surprise, she saw Charles and Emma walking toward them. They strolled, seemingly lost in deep conversation.

Sarah wanted to yell for Charles to notice her, but the knife on her neck was very threatening, and her mouth was still stuffed. Even after Charles and Emma were close to her, she dared not to make a sound but watched as they walked past her.

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Charles looked worried. Sarah clearly heard him sigh genuinely before he said, "I don't understand why Sarah did this to me. I really don't know. Am I not good enough for her?"

Emma comforted him. "Don't be sad brother. That woman is not worthy of you. She doesn't value you or all you have done for her. You went after her, giving in to her demands over and over again, but she continued to lose her temper with you. You see, you should be glad she left you this time!"

Charles sat down on the grass near the highway, with hands in his hair in desperation. In a sad tone, he continued. "What did I do wrong for her to hurt our child and leave me? She told me the abortion was a planned attack on her, but it never crossed my mind that she did it all herself. It was she who killed my baby. That day at the ranch, I felt it strange that she wanted to ride a horse while she was pregnant and insisted that I leave her alone.

"She kept urging me to answer my phone, and then she had the accident. I used to think it was my fault for leaving her alone, never expecting that she was orchestrating the whole episode. She didn't want our child and had to come up with extreme ideas to first get rid of her baby, and then leave me... Did she really do that?"

Emma put her hand on his shoulder and said, "Brother, she didn't love you at all. She always loved Daniel. Throughout this whole time, you didn't see that? If mom and I hadn't worked so hard trying to save you, she would still be deceiving you now. You always take her for the innocent one.

"Just look at how far she went when she hired someone to hurt you then pretended to be kidnapped. You keep thinking that something happened to her. But she was just tired of you and wanted to leave you. Do you know how much money she took from mom? One million! This means that she was only with you for your money. Come on, Charles, wake up and smell the roses, you should never feel sad because of her ever again!"

Charles shook his head repeatedly as he answered in a gradually weakening tone. "I just can't believe it... I can't believe it... the fact... Why did Sarah leave me

like this? Why...? I apologized to her and promised I would be nice to her forever, but she still refused to give me another chance."

Emma became angry, seeing Charles like this. She shook his shoulder with both hands and said, "Charles, come on! She took your money and left you after killing your child. She doesn't want to do anything with you anymore, and she won't come back. You shouldn't mourn her anymore, because she's not worthy of you! Sober up, brother!"

Charles still seemed to be depressed and sad. When Emma blamed him and cried while shaking him as if she was hurt to see him like this, he seemed to realize that Emma really loved him. He pulled her closer and held her tightly in his arms.

"Emma... Emma... I'm sorry. I know you're worried about me, I'm really sorry. Sarah left, you are all I have now... you are all I have now..." He held Emma tightly like a drowning man desperately holding onto driftwood to save his life.

Sarah was stunned and sad, not knowing what to do after what she had just seen and heard. Had Charles completely lost all trust in her? He believed that she had killed her own baby... their baby, and hired someone to hurt him as well as taking money from his mother?

Did he really see her as such a selfish, loveless woman and cheater? Had Charles ever trusted her when he repeatedly promised that he would stay on her side, trust her and protect her? Despite everything, he still chooses to suspect her the moment something happened?

Charles had always preferred to trust Christina and Emma before her! Sarah had forgiven him several times, but she couldn't tolerate this forever. Was it worth it for her to keep fighting for their marriage?

Thinking about everything she had gone through for him, Sarah started to cry.

Finally, Charles and Emma left, and she was taken back to the abandoned warehouse. Seeing Sarah's decadent appearance, her captors felt accomplished. The leader came up to her, with his knife turning in his hand, and said.

"Have you seen enough? The man doesn't trust you at all. What now? Even if he loved you, he keeps hurting you. He will always believe his mother over you, so is he worth fighting for? Do you think you could ever be happy with him? Silly woman!"

Sarah stared blankly into the distance, not revealing to anyone what she was thinking. She looked like the sadness inside her heart had overtaken her entirely.

"I'll give you one last chance. There are two ways this can play out for you. If you want the money and leave, we will immediately transfer one million to you and finalize your travel to whatever place you choose to go to. Look, this is a good option for you, much better than continuing to fight your destiny. If you choose the other option and die now, Charles will not remember you. How pathetic for you, really! Is it worth dying for such a man?"

Sarah finally looked up with cold eyes. She disdained his persuasion. In a bitter tone, she responded. "You still think I'll listen to you?"

Hearing that she still was resisting, the man sneered angrily at her. Stepping closer to her, he pinched her chin. "You refuse to reason until you're faced with the grim reality. Can you really be so stupid? Even if Charles loved you, he doesn't trust you. If he suspected you the first time, he would doubt you again.

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"Every time he suspects you of something, you will get hurt deeper and deeper. Is it worth it? We were hired to do a job, and we are going to finish it. I tried to reason with you and to leave Charles willingly. If you think about it, I'm quite helpful to you, right? I'm actually helping you to unveil the real Charles in front of you, you should be grateful to have this chance to escape. Isn't it better for you to just leave now while you still can?"

Sarah spits on his face in response. That criminal burst in anger and slapped her face, scorning, "I'm done with you, I have other things to tend to. I'll give you two days to think about what you want to do next. If you still refuse to reason at the end of two days, I will kill you without hesitating. I'm wasting my time trying to talk sense into a silly woman like you!"

After he was done ranting, he ordered everyone else to go out, and closed the warehouse door after them, extinguishing all lights, leaving her alone in the dark.

Sarah looked to the top of the warehouse in the darkness, where a small glimmer of light came through the cracks. Suddenly she felt overcome by sadness, and scenes

of her love story and marriage life passed in her mind like she was watching a movie.

In the beginning, it had all been too sweet and fairytale-like, but very soon, it had turned sour with nothing left but tormented moments. Both Christina and Emma had continuously interfered between her and Charles, making him distrust her and believe that she was having an affair with Daniel. He had listened to his mom and sister mistreat her verbally to hurt her yet had done nothing to stop them.

It looked like their love had only been in her imagination. She used to think that as long as they loved each other, they would be able to make it, but could they really ever overcome everything they had suffered?

Thinking about it realistically, Sarah knew that they could never be happy together again. If they stayed together, they would continue to hurt each other again and again, living a miserable life.

In the past, she had chosen to stay for the sake of her father-in-law, who had insisted on keeping the family together. She had failed to live up to his expectations now that he was not with them any longer, and Charles would never trust her again. Christina and Emma would never let go of their obsession to bother her. Was there any good in insisting? She was a self-respecting woman, then why should she tolerate them? Why should she give in to their demands?

The more Sarah thought about it, the sadder she became. Alone in the darkness, she cried her heart out, whispering his name. "Charles... Charles..." as tears rolled over her face non-stop. She didn't know why she was calling out his name, or if she loved or hated him. He was the cause of all her suffering, so why was she still thinking about him in her darkest hour? His name was written deep into her heart...

Two endless days passed with Sarah being tied up and alone in the dark warehouse. Occasionally, the guard that was outside would bring her food, which remained untouched. Sarah was starting to look skinny and weak from not eating, but all she could feel was a deep sadness overpowering her.

Finally, on the third day, the kidnapping leader came back. When he saw Sarah exhausted and with dull-looking eyes, he knew that she had been crying and was extremely sad.

He sneered and said with an irritated voice. "Well, have you figured it out? Are you going to accept the offer, or are you eager to die? I'm not in the mood to waste any more of my time in talking to you, silly woman!

Sarah looked at him with a dull expression but didn't say a word. Her fierceness and bravery were gone, and all that was left was a hollow shell.

The kidnapper continued. "Maybe I should tell you one more good news before I kill you. Your beloved husband, Charles, left Los Angeles and went back to Houston today. He's too busy with his business now to even bother looking for you. The good thing is he's still young and rich, considered a golden bachelor after divorcing you. There will be countless women offering themselves to him. You really thought he'd remember you forever? Especially since they think that you betrayed him?"

Sarah was numb. Though she was looking at her kidnapper, her expression was so bleak and expressionless that no one knew what she was thinking.

Still not satisfied, the kidnapper added. "You're such a silly woman. Look, is this what you call love? The trust between you two is broken by the slightest bit of misunderstanding. How can you ever be happy living like this? Even if you love each other, your stubborn character is the main reason for all this. Do you really love this man enough to want to die for him? Is he worth it?"

Sarah still didn't answer.

Irritated, her kidnapper turned cold and spit on the ground. "Fuck, just wasting my time here. Guys, take her out and kill her. No use in keeping her alive!"

The two young criminals untied her feet and dragged her out, with her hands still tied together. While being dragged out, Sarah suddenly seemed to regain some energy and said with a dull look, "Where am I going if I choose to accept your offer?"

Relieved not to have to kill her, the gang leader immediately ordered the two guys to stop as he walked toward her with a smile. "So, you finally came to your senses?"

Sarah didn't answer his question, just asked numbly, "Can I go to Texas? Isn't this the time for tulips? Tulips are so beautiful, aren't they?" She remembered that when they first got married, Charles had promised her they would go to Texas for

their honeymoon and then from there to the Maldives, but then they had to cancel all their honeymoon plans after Mr. Thomas had gotten sick.

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He owed her the promise of a happy life. Knowing that he couldn't keep his promise to her anymore, given that they had no future together, she wanted to go to Texas and see the tulips by herself, and then from there to the Maldives, just like they had planned before everything had fallen apart. She was going to achieve her dreams, and on the way, forgets about Charles. She wasn't willing to live in regrets for the rest of her life.

Once the gang leader noticed that Sarah had figured out a plan, he immediately became kind to her, "Okay, you can go anywhere you want. We'll handle all the formalities right now. You'd better leave right away and never come back. Charles can never see you again!"

Sarah was still numb but answered dazedly, "If I leave, I won't come back. When can I go? I'll just let my sister know, or else she'll be worried." Perhaps her sister was the only person who would be worried about her if she suddenly just disappeared.

"You'll leave tomorrow. You better call your sister tonight and make sure she won't tell Charles where you are! Otherwise... hum!" He looked at the knife in his hand in a threatening way.

"I see!" Sarah answered indifferently. She had made the final decision to leave Charles for good.

Hundreds of people were roaming at the airport. People are rushing back and forth, coming and going to places. They were all strangers to each other, but everyone had their own story to tell.

Was life just a combination of people's stories, stories that intertwined and interacted with each other, balancing the act of life, so if one person succeeds in the so-called life, another must fail?

This seemed to be the way happiness was balanced in this world and seemed to always stay the same.

Sarah figured that her marriage failure might bring success to her sister's marriage. Thinking this way was the only thing comforting her and distracting her misfortune. Sitting alone in the waiting area and waiting for her flight, she was completely oblivious about what her future life may hold. She felt helpless and frustrated.

She was finally leaving the bitter sea of marriage and Christina's humiliations behind. She was finally free and wouldn't get hurt by Charles's inactions any longer. Although thinking about it, it seemed that there were many benefits for her in leaving, she wasn't happy.

But did she have a choice? Happy or not, could she ever return to her former life? The answer was clear, no, she couldn't. The only thing she could do was to leave with her wounded spirit and never come back.

Christina was a powerful and capable woman. She quickly got everything taken care of for Sarah as soon as she had reached the green light to proceed from Sarah's kidnapper.

Without queuing or waiting in line like the rest of the passengers, Sarah was ready to leave the next morning with a million dollars having been transferred into a secret bank account in Switzerland in Sarah's name. All she had to do was go there and draw the money from there, or gradually transfer it into her personal bank account.

While Sarah waited at the airport, the two gang members watched her from afar, ensuring that she would board the plane. They had been instructed by Christina to stay until Sarah's plane was safely in the air to ensure her compliance.

Sarah herself didn't care whether she was guarded or not, she had no intention to stay. After all the disappointments she had lived through in her marriage, she didn't look forward to anything and had nothing keeping her here any longer.

From now on, her only goal would be to forget about Charles and restart her life just as if she had never met him. Sitting there, completely emerged in her own thoughts, she suddenly overheard the news being reported on TV in front of her. She heard Thomas's company being mentioned.

Since the airport was bustling with busy travelers and the volume of the TV was low, she barely heard the words "Mr. Thomas" and "company" among other words.

She looked up to watch the TV and saw many cars, policemen and journalists gathered around. The policemen were arresting her kidnappers, who were trying to hide their faces from the reporters and leading them to their cars one by one. Sarah recognized the abandoned warehouse where she had been held captive on TV.

Seeing this, Sarah suddenly stood up. Curious to understand what was happening, she walked closer to the TV and listened. The reporter was now facing the Camera and relating the story. "Christina Smith, the recently widowed and co-owner of the Thomas company, is suspected of being involved with gang members, smuggling, and human trafficking."

Suddenly Sarah saw Charles arrive, and a group of reporters gathered around him, bombarding him with questions about what was going on, but Charles remained silent and quickly walked over to the police where the reporters could not reach him.

The airport noise prevented Sarah from understanding the rest of the report being broadcast. Trying hard to understand what was being said, the news report was suddenly interrupted by an advertisement about skincare products.

Wanting to know more, Sarah went to the next TV hoping to find out more, but none of the other TVs were broadcasting news. Desperate to know more, she needed to get out of the airport to find out more.

The men guarding here were unaware of the current situation and tried to stop her when they saw her walking toward the exit. "Ms. Sarah, where do you think you're going? Your flight is about to take off, are you planning to make a run for it?"

"I want to see the news, I want to see the news. Please let me go! All I want is to see the news!"

Frustrated, one of them responded. "If you don't go back, I will be forced to misbehave with you! You promised that you'd leave if we let you go. Now that everything has been finalized, we have clear instructions to not let you back down on your deal!"

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Sarah answered in a hurry, "I'm not escaping, I just want to see the news." Something is going on, and I need to see it! Please let me see the news." Sarah threw all her belongings and started to run.

The two guys were about to chase her but had to be careful not to attract unwanted attention from the secret police patrolling the airport. However, as soon as those policemen saw them, they communicated through their walkie-talkie and came towards them as if they knew who they were, and we're going to arrest them.

Surprised, one of the criminals asked. "What's going on? The cops are coming towards us!"

The other criminal looked toward the cops and said. "Stay calm, maybe they are not after us. We have to remain calm!"

More and more police officers arrived and came running straight toward them. Seeing that they were caught, one of them shouted, "Run! something is going on here!"

Panicked, they ran off as the police chased after them, shouting, "Freeze, freeze!" They ran out of the waiting room.

Sarah only cared about the news, not paying attention to what was happening behind her. She just ran and ran, and finally saw a small shop that had a TV. Sarah rushed over and saw the shopkeeper watching the TV drama. Patting the counter, she shouted excitedly.

"Hello, can you turn the channels to the news? Please, please! I need to see the news."

But the shopkeeper just looked at her confused, not understanding what was going on. Not wanting to interrupt her show, she said in a frustrated tone. "Shit, no!" Then she continued watching her show with her daughter, ignoring Sarah's presence.

In a desperate attempt to persuade the shopkeeper to help her, Sarah took out some money and pleaded. "Please, help me out, I need to see the news, please!"

Seeing the money, the shopkeeper finally turned the channel. Unfortunately, the news about Mr. Thomas's company was over, and the international press was being broadcast. Seeing this, Sarah was so sad she wanted to cry.

At this moment, an old man who was sitting beside them reading his newspaper, said, "Are you after the news about Thomas's company? You can read this newspaper!" He held his paper toward her.

Sarah quickly took the newspaper and saw a headline about Thomas's company. Straining her eyes, she skimmed the article for keywords, her hands trembling heavily.

That old man saw how nervous she was and asked, "Are you okay? Are you close to them?"

Sarah read the article carefully, shook her head, and then gave the newspaper back to him. She couldn't say anything for a while until finally, she managed to barely audible. "I'm okay, thank you!"

The old man took his paperback, shaking his head. "Well, they have such a big business, no one expected them to be involved in such dark things. Look, this is their end! Their son unveils them. Not sure what to think. Strong or unfilial? He had his own mother arrested!"

Another young man, who looked like a college student, came over to buy something from the shop and overheard the conversation, and offered his opinion.

"Well, sir, I disagree with you. In my opinion, Charles did the right thing! They're still in time to correct some of his mother's mistakes. If he didn't turn her in, it would only have gotten worse. Who knows where she would have ended up? In a way, he is helping his mother!"

The old man nodded his head, but he still added. "But he is too cruel, turning his own mother over to the authorities!"

"Even the king is subject to the law. Mrs. Thomas deserves to be jailed for several years. Charles may just have saved her life before she would have been put behind bars for life!"

Since the two could agree on their opinions, they both shook their heads and left.

Sarah was still standing there, unable to digest what she had just learned. As those men had rightly discussed, Thomas's company had been involved with underground smuggling. Charles had turned his mom in when the police came to investigate. After the investigation, the police found Mrs. Thomas to be involved in a kidnapping. The investigation had led the police to the abandoned warehouse to catch the kidnappers.

Fortunately, by the time the police arrived, Sarah had already left, and the police had been able to proceed without much trouble, arresting the gang all at once.

Charles had accused Christina. Hearing this, Sarah didn't know whether to cry or to laugh. It was all so ridiculous. The person who always made trouble for her was now accused and in trouble. Should she be happy?

But rather than laughing, she felt sad. Why did Charles give his mother to the police? He had trusted Christina and Emma but had also gone with the police to the place where the kidnappers had kept her, watching them getting arrested. What was more, Thomas's Company was working with underground gangsters. Would he be able to help the company out of this as the president?

Would he not be investigated by the police? Was he safe?

What a pity really for Mr. Thomas, who had worked so hard to create a kingdom, just to have it destroyed by his wife right after his passing.

But had it anything to do with her now? She had left the Thomas family with all their affairs. Sarah felt it was ridiculous that she is still worried about them. Now that she had finally gone, she shouldn't think about Charles and Christina any longer. It was all over now. No matter what happened, it had nothing to do with her anymore, right?

She turned around to leave the shop, but the shopkeeper behind her said, "Hey, Miss, didn't you want to see the news? Here it is. Look, do you want to see it?" Maybe it was because she had taken Sarah's money, she was acting kinder now.

Sarah turned back to look at the TV at the same moment as the camera set to Charles. Countless microphones were being held towards him by reports which were all eager to get some information from him. Some of them were asking about his feelings about the incident and his mother's involvement, and why he had accused his mother? Another one asked why he followed the police to the old warehouse where the gang members had been.

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Charles didn't answer any of their questions. Instead, he took a microphone and looked straight at the camera with a worried and sad expression. After a long silence, he finally said.

"You will get the answers to your questions later. For now, I need to say something. Sarah, where are you now? I'm sorry, but I've been waiting for you to come back. Are you watching this? I've been waiting for you. Can you hear me?" His eyes were filled with love and desperation. He looked gaunt and as if he was suffering from something. He looked like he was searching and waiting for her. His words sounded so sincere as if he was willing to do anything for her to come back.

When seeing it, Sarah became even sadder and started to cry. She quickly wiped her tears and turned to leave in silence, without looking back.

When the shopkeeper saw her walking away, she called out, "Miss, miss!" Not understanding what had happened to Sarah. Why was she leaving right away after watching this news?

Sarah went back to her seat and kept wiping her tears continuously. The people around her started to look at her with concern. Finally, she lowered her head and cried on her knees.

Charles had apologized to her, but was it useful? After those two days tied up in the warehouse, she had analyzed their relationship and finally understood their love. Every time Charles hurt her, he'd apologize to her, beg her to come back, and promise her that he would never hurt her again no matter what. But the minute something happened, he distrusted her and hurt her again and again. He had never kept his promise.

Just like now when she had lost her child. He had promised to trust her forever and never hurt her. But then she had been kidnapped, but rather than finding her, he had chosen to listen to Christina and believed that she had deliberately planned her abortion and then left him for money.

Now he had turned his mother into the police, and apologized to her publically on TV, and asked her to come back.

But she knew Charles very well. Sarah knew Charles and the future of their marriage. There was no future between them. She had been thinking for a long time, and on the third day in the warehouse, she decided to leave Charles no matter what she was told by her kidnappers.

Whether Christina was arrested and Charles had realized his mistake and apologized to her or not, she must leave this time because Charles had no sense of security and always distrusted her. He was easily influenced by others and would misunderstand her again, even without Christina being involved in the future.

This was his own problem, not Christina's or Emma's. It was a fundamental problem. She did not expect Charles; whether Christina was in jail, and Charles had asked her to come back or not, she would not go back.

This time, she had decided to leave forever and never look back.

After crying for a while, Sarah calmed down and stopped thinking about it. She just sat there on her seat and waited for her flight to Texas. The big screen on the wall was displaying the time, second by second, getting closer to her departure and leaving all of this behind.

Time lapsed so quietly, time that would never come back. They had cried and laughed together, been happy and sad. It was all over now, and it wouldn't come back.

After Christina was arrested, she was having one last conversation with Charles before being taken off to jail. They were alone in the room, the police waiting on the outside, ready to take her away.

Christina was still dressed in her own high fashion clothes, still having a sense of dignity, but she wasn't as confident as usual. She looked like a woman without a soul, a hollow shell. She looked calm and seemed to have accepted her fate, or maybe it was because she was used to being in the public eye and tried to remain calm.

"I never expect you, my dear son, to turn against me like this in the end!" she said in a cold tone.

Charles stood opposite her with his head hanging low, solemn as if nothing had happened. "Mom, this is not a frame-up; you are guilty!"

"No matter what I did, I am still your mother. I gave life to you and raised you. Don't you think you'll be punished for treating your mother like this?" She said in a calm yet ironic tone. Her words were filled with irony for Charles's betrayal toward her.

Sad and disappointed, Charles answered. "This is what you taught me. When you killed your grandson first and subsequently my father, I knew you didn't care about me, but disdained our relationship. How cold-hearted you are to ignore everything, including your own family, just to achieve your goal."

"You seem to know everything in detail, yet why did you pretend to be deceived and listen to us?" Christina raised her voice and became a little excited, looking at Charles coldly.

"If I hadn't done that, you wouldn't have trusted me, and the police wouldn't have found the place where Sarah was being kept. How else could I save her?"

"You've always trusted Sarah over us, but you pretended to trust us and hurt Sarah! Do you think Sarah will come back now? You hurt her deeply this time, so even if you abandoned Emma and me, Sarah would never come back, and you are left with nothing!"

Charles clenched his fists in anger. "You kidnapped Sarah. If I didn't force her to leave, she'd still have been a hostage at the warehouse by the time police arrived, which would have put her in danger. I'd rather force her to leave for her own safety. After she left, the police arrested her kidnappers without harming her. If her safety means that she leaves me for good, then that is still better than the alternative!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" Christina burst into laughter, and before she said sarcastically, "Charles, you have done so many things for this woman, but she doesn't know that. Instead, she finally left disappointed in you. I don't know whether you are smart or pathetic! Do you hate me that much that it's worth betraying me just to save that woman?"

"Mom, this is all your fault. If you hadn't ganged up with those criminals, you'd be just fine now!"

"Charles, you are so unfilial! How can you treat your mother like this? How can you do this to me?" Christina suddenly stood up in anger as if she was going to smash Charles with something. When the police outside heard the noise, they opened the door and subdued her, but she kept shouting at Charles and scolding him for betraying her.

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The police advised Charles to leave. Charles glanced at his mother but couldn't tolerate seeing her out of control and turned to leave. Christina's screams were heard from the outside as she resisted the police who were handcuffing her until she finally collapsed in sadness and anger.

Charles turned to the wall, lowered his head, and punched the wall fiercely with his fist, decadent and frustrated. No matter what, that woman was his mother. Despite everything she had done to him, he still felt sad to see her in this condition.

Daniel walked toward him and patted him on the shoulder. "I know it's hard. If it helps, cry it out. She is your mom after all, and nobody will blame you for feeling this way."

Charles turned around and looked at Daniel with red and wet eyes. It was evident that he was crying inside, but he still controlled himself from the outside.

"I'm all right!" He said indifferently.

Daniel patted his shoulder again and sighed, "Why don't you tell your mother your plan? You turned her in because you are worried about her. After all, if she is stopped on time, she will serve less time in jail and will be able to resume her normal life soon again.

"Without your intervention, she would sink deeper and deeper, and once the day comes where she is investigated, she may face a life sentence rather than just a few years. What you did is in her best interest, so why are you so indifferent to her now and let her think that you are against her? You can explain it to her!"

Charles shook his head with a bitter smile on his face. "There is no need for it. She's my mom, I know her well. She is out of control now, so even if I told her that I did it for her own good, she'd call me a liar. Let her go! If she needs to vent

her anger by hating me, then so be it. Gradually, she will start to understand. Based on her personality, telling her the truth doesn't help, she has to realize it herself eventually. There's no use in explaining anything to her right now. Time will prove everything."

"You have the same character and are easily misunderstood, like Sarah..."

Hearing Sarah's name, Charles's eyes immediately became dim. Both remained silent for a while.

"Thank you for your help at this time. Without our help, my mom would not have believed me so easily, and I wouldn't have found where Sarah was being kept hostage."

"Don't mention it. Sarah is just like a younger sister to me, I took care of her since we were children. But it seems you made a big mistake this time, and she left you silently for good this time."

Charles became even sadder, lowering his head in silence.

"Your mom has been arrested now. What are you going to do now? And your sister Emma... What's gonna happen to her?"

"I'll send her far away. Emma is still young and easy to be confused. She listened to my mom's every word and followed her on the wrong path. I intend to send her abroad to get more practical experiences in life. Eventually, as she matures, she will understand why.

Daniel nodded and finally sighed, "Well, it seems like you have it all figured out. I thought Sarah would be safe if our plan succeeded, but I didn't expect Sarah to leave quietly!"

"I know. I don't know if she can forgive me. But even if she did, I don't know where she is now. How can I ask her to forgive me when I don't know where she is?" Charles turned toward the wall and punched it again in frustration.

Daniel stared at him for a long time, as if he was trying to figure out what to do. After a while, he looked up in determination and said, "I'm relieved to see you like this. Charles, I didn't want to tell you, but realizing how deeply you love Sarah... more than I ever could... there's no need to hide it from you any longer. Actually... I know where Sarah is!"

Charles turned around and looked at him as if he had misheard him. "What did you just say? Excuse me?"

Daniel sighed, "I know where Sarah went after the police captured the kidnappers. She called her sister and told her that she wanted to leave because her marriage had failed. She made her sister promise not to let anyone know about her whereabouts, especially you. Her sister called me, but I chose to be silent for Sarah.

"I hope she finds a new life and is happy. But I see how much you love Sarah and did so much for her that I feel you are the best thing that could happen to her. It would be a pity for her to miss out on your love based on a misunderstanding, that's why I tell you the truth now."

Charles grabbed Daniel's shirt. "What are you talking about? I don't want to hear this! You said you know where Sarah is. Can you tell me where she is? Tell me now!"

Startled, Daniel laughed and shook his head. "Don't pull at my shirt. We're not fighting. At this rate, the police will come for us. I'll tell you... Sarah is at the international airport, waiting for her flight to Texas. She leaves at 1:30 in the afternoon. Let me see..."

He raised an arm to check the time on his watch. He lifted his eyes in surprise and exclaimed. "Oh my god, NO! I forgot the time while we were chatting. It's 1:05. I don't know if you can reach her before her flight leaves.

"Hurry up!

"Quickly! Or you won't reach her!"

"Why didn't you say that earlier? I really want to hit you right now. Daniel, you really outdid yourself today!" Charles pushed him aside as he took his jacket and rushed out.

Daniel shouted behind him. "Charles, you must catch her! You must make her happy!" Watching Charles run to catch up with Sarah, Daniel felt a little upset. After all, he just gave away his best chance to ever be with her. But thinking that Sarah had a chance to be happy, he felt satisfied and smiled. All that mattered was that Sarah was happy, even if that meant with another man.

Charles runs several red lights as he sped toward the airport. His only thought was Sarah, and how he needed to get there on time before he missed his final chance to get her back.

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It was 1:20 p.m. Sarah's flight had started boarding.

Sarah got up, took her luggage, and was about to queue for the final security check before boarding, when suddenly someone stepped in front of her and grabbed her bags, preventing her from leaving.

Sarah looked up and saw Charles's aunt in front of her. Surprised, she asked coldly, "Aunt... You...What are you doing?"

Her aunt simply responded. "Let's talk!"

Sarah looked at her for a moment and understood her intentions, then lowered her head and said. "No, I know what you want, but I've decided to leave for good. Charles and I broke up not only because of Christina and Emma but because of his character. I don't have any confidence or expectation for him anymore. I am sorry. I need to go. Please let me go!"

But his aunt wouldn't let go of her luggage and insisted. "You can't be this indifferent. You can't sentence Charles to death based on your own ideas!"

"No, it's not just my own ideas, but my judgment over the past year. I have given Charles many chances, but every time he disappointed me. I've had enough of his insensitivity. I'm not interested in tolerating it any longer!" Sarah said with a newfound determination.

His aunt remained silent for a long time, until she finally said, "Wanna bet with me?"

"What?"

"I bet that Charles loves you. If he loves you, please forgive him and stay with him. If not, then I'll let you go. I would accept it even if you never come back. Can you?" "How do you want to bet?"

His aunt looked at her with a cold and firm look, as if she had made the most significant decision ever.

Meanwhile, Charles was still stuck in traffic. Even though he ran several red lights, he was still stuck in a big traffic jam. Anxious, he hammered the steering wheel several times as he looked at the time, it was 1:20. He could not lose any more time.

He suddenly opened the door and jumped out of the car, abandoning his car in the middle of traffic, and ran off. He saw a young man slowly riding on a bicycle. He stopped and grabbed the bike without hesitating!

The young boy yelled after him, but Charles shouted back to him without looking back, "There's an Audi A6L behind you. The door is unlocked. It's yours. I need this bicycle!" He rode away quickly, leaving the young man standing there puzzled about what just happened.

Charles rode the bicycle all the way to the airport. He knew he couldn't be late and prayed that Sarah's flight would be delayed. Otherwise, he'd lose her forever.

Finally, he arrived at the airport at around 1:40 p.m. Desperate, he asked at the information desk if the plane to Texas had yet been taxed yet.

From the window, he watched the plane outside, gradually gaining altitude in the blue sky. He was in disbelief. Was he too late? Did Sarah leave?

Charles felt helpless and didn't know what to do next. He knelt on the ground and cried bitterly, "Sarah... Sarah..." He felt so painful. He had never been so sad before when losing someone. He ignored everyone around him and collapsed to the ground, crying bitterly.

After a long time, he heard a familiar voice behind him. "Charles, look back!"

The voice sounded like his aunt's voice. Charles turned slowly around and saw his aunt standing behind him, looking at him with a smile on her face. Beside her, Sarah was standing with a suitcase in her hand. Sarah looked at him as tears were streaming down her face.

"You see, I told you that my nephew loves you so much. I just told you all about him. He turned his mother into the police for you. He did so many things for you and defied all odds to come to the airport to find you. Does that still not prove his love for you? If he didn't love you, would he do all those things for you?"

Charles looked at Sarah, and life turned back into his devastated body. He got up immediately and shouted in surprise, "Sarah!" as he runs toward her.

Sarah suddenly said coldly, "Stop here! Stop!"

Charles was shocked. He stood still, not knowing what he had done wrong now, and called her name in a pleading voice, "Sarah..."

Sarah looked at him, with tears still flowing down her face. "Charles, this is the last time I ask you and the last chance I give you. Do you really love me? Can I trust you?"

Charles said sadly, "Sarah, do you still not understand my heart after all that happened today? If I didn't love you, would I have come here?"

"I see..." Sarah cried, trying to squeeze out a smile but only cried harder. She was no longer sad but overcome with love. She suddenly reached out toward Charles.

Charles immediately stepped up and hugged her with new energy, repeatedly whispering in her ear, "Sarah, I love you, I love you so much. Don't leave me. Never leave me, please, please!"

Sarah couldn't contain herself and cried on his shoulder while hitting him with her fists on his back as she hugged him, telling him how hurt she had been when he deceived everyone into thinking that he had believed Christina over her. Nobody had suspected what he really was doing, and that all he did was to save her.

Sarah cried that he loved her and trusted her. He cherished her and chose her above everything else.

Sarah kept crying, but Charles only hugged her tightly. His aunt stood beside them, wiping her eyes as she looked at them, but was smiling contentedly. It was not until the people around them were starting to spectate that they let go of their embrace, but Charles kept holding Sarah's hand so tightly as if he promised her that he would never let her go again!

In the distance, Daniel watched the plane flying in the blue sky. Though the aircraft had taken off, he felt that Charles had found Sarah, and they were finally together. With a warm smile on his lips, he murmured in his heart, "Sarah, Charles, you deserve to be happy!"

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It had been six months since Sarah gave Charles one last chance at the airport. They now were living happy and in love, far away from Christina and Emma. Their life had finally turned peaceful again, even though Charles was very busy maintaining two companies.

Christina was serving a 3-year prison sentence, and Emma had gone to travel.

Every night when Charles came home late, he looked exhausted to the point that he could hardly open his eyes. Sarah felt bad for him, but there was nothing she could do to alleviate his workload.

As the only son, Charles was responsible for continuing the family business. He was now the head of both Thomas companies, and Sarah understood what he was going through.

Previously she had been furious when he mentioned that his aunt would help to raise their children when he was busy at work, she had felt it very irresponsible of him to want to escape his parental duties. But now she started to understand him better and knew that he had thought it through at that time and knew what he was talking about.

At that time, she didn't understand him and had been so angry at him. Seeing how busy he was now, she realized and stopped arguing about it. Once Charles noticed that she accepted the idea, she seemed to feel guilty about leaving her home alone so often.

One day after he came home, he grabbed her hands and said. "Sarah, I'm sorry I should make more time to be with you! You must be lonely every day in this big house with nobody except the housekeeper, right?"

Sarah shook her head and laughed. She felt relieved with complex emotions, tears almost coming up her eyes as she answered. "I suddenly understand one thing. The

reason why we fought so often was not that we weren't secure enough with each other, it was because we didn't properly communicate.

"For example, about how to raise our children while growing the company. If I had thought more about you, maybe we wouldn't have had so many problems. Carrie told me once the most important thing between couples is knowing how to communicate with each other!"

Charles also laughed and responded. "I didn't consider you enough either at the beginning, but after you were kidnapped, I started to understand that I had been too self-centered. It was you who made me change my view of life and taught me to be more considerate and appreciative toward others! Thank you for giving me the chance to make it up to you. I can't imagine if I had lost you. Devastated and in pain, I realized how much I really loved you!"

Looking at his loving eyes, Sarah couldn't help but laugh, patting him lovingly. "You're so sweet, we have been together for a while now, and you still love me this much? You make me shy!"

She was joking, but her words were full of happiness. Charles laughed too. Suddenly he pulled her closer and wrapped his arms around her as he whispered in her ear, "Don't you know that I love you more and more every day? Sometimes even when I'm in my office, I can't stop thinking about you!"

"What do you think of? What do you imagine?" Sarah leaned closer against his arms.

Charles looked at her with passion-filled eyes. Smiling, he said in a low voice, "I always miss you. I want to snuggle you in my arms, kiss me, feel your breath on my skin... I want you to be crazy. I want you to be soft and melt in my love... I want to touch your body, your lips, smell your fragrance... indulge in your endless charms..."

"You're such a bad guy!" Sarah hit him gently against his shoulder, then sat up and said, "If you continue, I won't talk to you anymore,..." as she looked at him with passion.

Charles suddenly pulled her back and started to kiss her, keeping her from saying anything else. He pinned Sarah over the sofa, covering her with his body, and gradually made her lose control over herself under his touch. Finally, she put her hands on his neck and surrendered to him.

Charles whispered in her ear, "Let's have another child. This time, I won't hurt you..."

Sarah was in a daze. She didn't hear him clearly since he was kissing her and just murmured something. Finally, Charles took her upstairs and led her into the paradise of love.

Their passion was like fuel poured over a dim fire. When he touched her, the dim light in her exploded into a full-fledged wildfire, all-consuming and all-inclusive. Sarah felt how Charles longed for her, but even in the most ardent moment, he cared for her tenderly and asked her repeatedly. "Does it hurt? Are you comfortable?"

She noticed Charles's considerate actions. He used to be mad and overbearing during sex with other women, but now he was different. He cared for her and considered her feelings with a very gentle touch. She felt how deeply he loved her and cared for her.

In return, Sarah let herself go to meet all his needs too. She could give him everything he wanted without hesitation.

Finally, they both reached their ecstasies. It was not until midnight that Sarah eventually fell asleep. While she was drifting off to sleep, Charles held her gently and whispered in her ear. "Sarah, tomorrow... Should we go to visit my mother?"

His words hit Sarah like a thunderbolt back to reality. Not wanting to answer, she pretended to be too far asleep to care. In fact, when she heard Christina's name mentioned, she still felt frightened. She didn't know how to get along with her.

Maybe it was because Sarah still couldn't forgive Christina for what she had done to her. Over the past six months, Charles had visited his mother several times, but Sarah had never gone with him. Sarah didn't even ask Charles about his mother after his visits. Charles knew how she felt about his mom and hadn't pressured her.

Unexpectedly, he now asked her to come with him to visit his mother.

Sarah knew that it was difficult for Charles to be between them. Not wanting to get into an argument, she just vaguely answers, "Um..." Then she pretended to fall asleep, ignoring his request.

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Charles seemed satisfied with her answer. He hugged her and kissed her forehead as he said, "Maybe tomorrow... You'll see something different!"

Something different? What was different about Christina? Sarah didn't understand what he meant but was reluctant to think about it any further. Their road ahead was still uncertain in terms of what Christina was concerned about. For now, she was tired and didn't want to think about anything frightening.

The next morning Charles got up early but didn't disturb Sarah. Their maid prepared breakfast for them, and when everything was ready, Charles went to wake Sarah up. When Sarah woke up, she found that it was only seven o'clock in the morning. It was still so early, so she asked, "Why did you get up so early?"

"It takes several hours to drive to New Orleans, so if we don't get up early, we won't reach the female prison before noon."

They ate breakfast, and Charles asked the maid to prepare some of his mother's favorite snacks. Once everything was ready, and they finally left, it was already eight o'clock. Sarah thought that Charles became different based on his behaviors right now.

He used to be so indifferent toward his mother! But ever since Christina was in prison, he had become a dutiful son taking care of his mother. It was actually a good thing. All Sarah knew was that Charles was different. She used to think that he behaved like such a little boy in what his mother was concerned about, but now he was acting mature and attentive. Would Christina appreciate seeing him like this? Would she understand him? Would she know Charles's intention?

Thinking of Christina's fierce appearance, Sarah was not in the mood to see her. It wasn't because of her cruelty, but perhaps her injuries were still too deep. Once she walked away that day at the airport, she had decided not to think or see Christina ever again.

Once they arrived at the prison, Sarah stopped when the guard opened the door to the meeting room. Charles looked at her in concern and asked. "Is something wrong?"

Sarah looked down, and after a short silence, she finally just said. "You go ahead, I'll see you outside!"

"You... Don't you want to come in with me?" Charles was a little surprised and puzzled.

Sarah barely shook her head in denial but didn't answer him directly. After hesitating for a long time, she finally managed to say, "You go, I'll be outside! If she doesn't want to see me, don't mention me!"

Charles seemed to be a little disappointed, but he understood Sarah's feelings. After all, his mother had done horrible things to her, even nearly killed her when she was kidnapped. If Sarah were an ordinary woman, she would not have agreed to come this far. Maybe he was asking for too much.

Sighing, he patted Sarah on the shoulder and said, "Okay, you can wait outside for me!" Then he went in carrying his gift, followed by the prison guard.

Standing outside and looking around, Sarah walked along the sidewalk, staring at the buildings around here. It was autumn, the leaves were falling, leaving a colorful carpet of rustling leaves everywhere. The trees were almost empty, barely any leaves were still on the branches.

It looked so desolate here, just like Christina's life. She had been born into a wealthy family and never suffered any hardship since childhood. After growing up, she married a man who loved her to the end of his life. Before Mr. Thomas's death, he had loved and adored her, always listened to her, and hardly ever stood up against her.

Perhaps that was the reason why Christina was so stubborn and resorted to extreme measures to achieve her goals.

Then, in the autumn of her life, she had lost her power and felt from being a queen to a prisoner, given to the authorities by her one and only son. It must be a terrible ordeal for Christina to end like this, but karma always comes back based on the person's deeds, good or bad.

Sarah didn't want to think any further about what Christina had done to her. She was being punished enough. The more she thought about it, the more she realized that she didn't actually hate Christina anymore, but felt sorry for her. She was paying for her mistakes, there was no need to add further insult to the injury.

Having come to this conclusion, Sarah went back to the meeting room. She stood outside the door and overheard their conversation from the outside.

"Did Anny do all this?" Christina was asked in a soft and smooth tone rather than her usual foul voice.

Sarah couldn't help but feel surprised. It was hard to believe it was Christina speaking in such a peaceful tone.

"Yes, mom, since Sarah and I went back to Houston, we invited Anny to come with us. After all, you are used to Anny's cooking, and we also like her style of cooking." Charles answered.

He also sounded bright and pleasant. He was not the same person who used to talk with so much disdain to his mother.

"You keep Anny here for me? Everyone knows you like modern food, but Anny cooks traditional meals. You were never interested in traditional food." Christina sounded touched.

"Sarah, also traditional meals!" Charles countered her.

Sarah heard Christina sighting, then asked hesitantly. "Your aunt... what about her?"

"What?" Charles seemed surprised since his mother had always had a bad relationship with his aunt before, which was the reason why she had left the Thomas company and opened up a kindergarten instead. He hadn't expected his mother to ask for his aunt. After a chuckle, he answered.

"Well, she's swamped lately, but sometimes when I'm swamped at the office, I call her for advice. She's always happy to help. Don't forget that she graduated from Yale University in management. Although she has been out of the business for many years, she's still very good at it. Ha-ha, the executives admire her wisdom very much!"

Christina became silent. After what seemed like a long time, she finally said. "Your aunt was a commercial genius, but unfortunately..." If it wasn't for Christina, Charles's aunt would not have been so angry and left the whole family.

"I'm sorry for what I did to your aunt..." she finally resumed.

After that, all Sarah could hear was a low whisper, and although she listened carefully, she couldn't understand anything.

Charles remained quiet.

If he had understood his mother, maybe he chose to remain quiet because he knew his mother needed some time. Both Sarah and Charles knew that it was quite hard for Christina to apologize.

After a while, they started to talk about Emma and many other people, but Christina never mentioned Sarah. Even when Charles mentioned her by name, Christina skillfully ignored it as if she was unwilling to talk about her at all.

Sarah listened from outside the door and gradually felt disappointed. Maybe it was still too hard for Christina to admit her mistake. Even though she had changed in many ways, she was always proud of the core. How would she recognize her mistakes so readily, or even apologize?

After half an hour later, the guard reminded Charles that visitation was over. Charles said his farewell and was about to leave when Christina suddenly called out.

"Charles!"

Charles turned back to look at her and asked: "You need anything else?"

Christina seemed to hesitate for a while, but then suddenly took well-wrapped silk from one of her prison gown pockets and handed it to Charles.

"This jade bracelet was handed down to me by my mother with good wishes for many children and grandchildren when I first married. I have been carrying it with me all these years, never leaving it from my sight, and

it has brought me many good fortunes. Now, good fortunes are not as important to me anymore... You take it..."

After hesitating for a long time, she added. "Give it to her, but don't let her know it's from me!"

Charles was surprised yet ecstatic but tried not to show it. He just laughed happily and said, "Mom, thank you! You know, really, thank you! I'll give it to her!" Was Charles really thanking her for finally recognizing Sarah and in her own way apologizing for what she had done?

Sarah heard all of it from outside the door, and it seemed that she got released from all the bad emotions all of a sudden. She had never expected that this would happen. Startled and moved, she couldn't help but tear up from excitement. She had waited for this moment for so long.

She finally felt accepted!

She wiped her tears away and smiled, deliberately hiding from Charles when he came out. Once he saw her, she pretended to know nothing, just smiled and took his hand as if nothing had happened.

Charles noticed her bright smile and asked, "What are you smiling about? You seem very happy."

Sarah just laughed mysteriously and answered. "Nothing, just a wish of mine has come true. I feel my life is so beautiful. What would you like to have for dinner tonight? I'll cook for you?"

"Is that true?"

"Yes!"

Charles was happy to see her like this and laughed out, so did Sarah. They had finally found the peace they had been searching for. Indeed, nothing is better than feeling loved and understood by one's spouse and a harmonious family!

There's nothing that can't be undone with the right intentions, and there's nothing that can't be settled. It's all just a matter of time and patience. Life

is so good and will bring many more challenges, but Mr. Thomas, who was looking down on them from heaven, could finally rest in peace.

Author's Note:

We witnessed the love-hate journey between Sarah and Charles and they ended up a happy couple. Here's the final chapter of this novel and I am grateful that you give it a try. I would like to invite you to check out my other novels posted on this platform.

- 1. Billionaire's Great Obsession
- 2. A Force Love Contract With Gang Leader

All these novels are completed. Until our next journey together.

Sending you my warm hug!

Anna Shannel Lin

END