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It took 30 minutes before Jack finally arrived at Winona's house.

When she didn't come to the door after he pressed the doorbell twice, he reached out and attempted to turn the doorknob.

Click! Click!

"Are you home, Winona?"

Click! Click!

"Winona!"

Enter title...

Despite all the noise he was making, there was still no response from behind the door. He took out his phone and called her again, and he could hear the ringtone coming from inside after the call got connected.

That was the confirmation he needed to know that Winona was at home after all.

He then immediately kept his phone before putting all his force into slamming his body against the door.

The door frame seemed to loosen by the second time he did that.

Seeing this, Jack took a few steps backward, and used his momentum from a quick run toward the door to try to knock the door down. He managed to get it open this time. His inertia kept him going for a bit until he stood there with his feet firmly planted on the floor.

It was then that he saw Winona lying on the floor.

"Winona? Winona!"

He ran over and supported her, only for her to remain motionless with her eyes tightly shut. He then quickly carried her in his arms as he rushed out the door.

However, the elevator stayed on the 22nd floor no matter how long he seemed to wait.

Thirty seconds had passed by the time he was too concerned to continue waiting, so he headed straight to the emergency exit while still carrying her.

Jack didn't stop once to take a breather as he ran all the way to the first floor from the 18th floor they were at.

Just as they had reached downstairs, a weak voice softly called out from his chest area.

"Mr. Jack?"

The man was huffing and puffing for air, but as soon as he heard his name being called, he gradually slowed down his strides and lowered his head at the same time Winona weakly looked up at him with a meek gaze.

It was just a simple look she was giving him, and yet he immediately came to a stop on the spot when he looked at her.

"Tam famished." The woman blinked innocently.

"Did you bring cake for me?"

He almost laughed out loud when he heard that, but he stayed calm as he reprimanded her, "You fainted, but you are still thinking about eating?"

"It's nothing serious. I have low blood sugar. I occasionally get lightheaded when

I don't eat. I will be fine after I take something," she assured while giving him an exhausted smile.

He sighed after she said that.

"So do you want to eat or go home for now?"

"I want to eat something," she said.

"I want to eat lamb soup from the breakfast restaurant by the entrance of the residential area"

"What a glutton," Jack casually remarked as he subconsciously headed toward the restaurant with her still in his arms.

"Uh..."

Winona lightly tugged on his jacket.

"I... I can walk on my own."

Upon realizing the situation, he quickly placed her feet first on the ground. He swiftly tidied himself up a little bit, and that was all it took for him to look like the exquisite man that he was.

Winona, however, was still wearing her work clothes from yesterday.

Not only was her hair frizzy and dry, her skin also looked terrible.

"Let's go."

She only brushed out the wrinkles on her clothes before she started marching forward in long steps. She hadn't even taken her first step when Jack grabbed her by the collar, stopping her from going anywhere.

"Woah!"

She almost fell as she stumbled.

"Aren't we going to get food?"

"Even ghosts would hide from you if they were to see you in your current state. How is my sister-in-law supposed to not feel ashamed if someone took a photo of you now and posted it online?"

Jack even made a disdainful face at her.

Winona combed her fingers through her hair, and when she imagined how she looked like now, all of her thoughts of going outside instantly vanished.

Still, she craved the lamb soup from that specific shop. They always stop selling after the afternoon, which meant she would have to wait until tomorrow for it.

But going out with her current appearance would definitely make news that would be harmful to Elise's reputation. She suddenly couldn't decide what she should do now.

The man almost laughed as he looked at her having an inner debate with herself.

"Are you actually hesitating between Elise's reputation and a bowl of lamb soup?"

Winona scratched the back of her head as she lowered her chin. It wasn't like she wanted to have this kind of conflict.

She was just so hungry! Not only that, they were talking about the lamb soup!

The man could only let out another sigh as he conceded, "Go home. Remove your makeup and wash your face, then wait for me."

As Jack abruptly tossed out that one sentence, he turned around, showing her his handsome back as he headed in the direction she mentioned.

"Thank you, Mr. Jack!"

It was in that instant Winona decided that she, too, wanted to be Jack's diehard fan from today onward! After half an hour, she held in her hands a disposable lunch box as she gulped down the last mouthful of lamb soup before she let out a satisfied sigh.

"Yummy! If only I could have another bowl..."

Jack's eyebrows lifted out of amusement at that, but he still complained, "You still aren't full even though I added extra meat for you? Aren't you afraid you will ruin your stomach? I also went and got the restaurant owner's phone number just now; should I tell him to deliver us another bowl?"

"No, it is fine," Winona said with her lips pursed while shaking her head.

"You know how good things won't feel so good anymore once you overdo it? One bowl is enough for me. I will look forward to it next time if I keep it at one bowl."

"Alright."

Jack didn't insist, and proceeded to get into a more comfortable sitting position and pretended to joke, "I heard that someone is brokenhearted."

He already had an odd feeling when Elise sent him the message this morning. He could guess that that was the case after seeing Winona in such a terrible state.

Presently, Winona only pressed her lips together and lowered her head.

Silence seemed like it was the best answer an adult could give.

Being the ever-observant man that he was, Jack didn't press for an answer.

"Now that's better," he nonchalantly commented with a brisk smile.

"What good is a love affair anyway? If you put your heart and soul into working for Elise, I promise you a lifetime of eating different good food!"

"Alright!" Winona cheered.

As the conversation came to an end, they both gradually realized that something felt a little out of place.

They then fell silent as they turned to look in different directions.

The air was getting intimate by the second, but neither one of them said or did anything to break the atmosphere.

After all, this situation was a special case. It was always easy for a heartbroken woman and a single man to get into an entanglement.

However, they knew for sure that they would realize that they had only acted impulsively once their minds were clear.

At least, this was what was going through Winona's head.

There was a place in Salt Stone City where water could be seen for miles right after opening the window.

For Elise who grew up in Northwest, she had always found a sense of longing for canal towns.

After the tourists around the area had returned to their lodging at night, she took the chance to go on a stroll at the alley near the body of water with Alexander.

Every river and bridge here was something that was worthy of admiration to her.

They kept walking in the direction where the moon hung high, until they were in a deeper part of town.

Just as they were passing through a narrow alley, a cowering figure suddenly popped out from the side and fell in front of them. Elise quickly bent down to look at the person's face illuminated by moonlight—it was the champion from the Calligraphy Contest not long ago, Abby Mellor. She then turned to Alexander and urged, "I know her." It took him a mere second to understand what she was saying, and he picked Abby up and slung her arm across his shoulders to support her. Elise hurried forward and helped him with it as well. The two then proceeded to work hand in hand to bring Abby to the nearest hospital. After an emergency treatment was administered, Abby finally regained consciousness and she slowly opened her eyes. "What happened?" Elise calmly asked, only for Abby's tears to roll along the corners of her eyes before she even uttered a reply. Certain spots on the pillow underneath her head had turned wet as she babbled, "My stepmother... She didn't believe me when I said I would rebuild the Mellor Family. She took a ten million dowry in exchange for my hand in marriage with a 60-year-old man. I'm only 17 years old. I didn't agree to it, so I put up a fight. She beat me up because of that..." Learning about the unjust, Elise immediately exploded in anger and roared, "You can totally make a police report! What right does she have to control your life when you are legally the heiress of the Mellor Family?!"

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Abby shook her head in despair as she cried, "It is useless. It is written in my father's will that all the inheritance is to be handled by my stepmother before I come to age. She already came up with an excuse this time I came home that she lost all the money, and that she won't give me a penny!" "This must have been hard on you." Elise knew exactly how helpless it felt to not have someone to rely on. Abby finally broke out in tears, either because she was moved, or because she felt helpless. Enter title... Feeling upset as she watched Abby, Elise turned to throw a glance at Alexander before she turned to look at Abby again. She then gently placed her hand over the back of Abby's palm. "I won't turn a blind eye against this. You are my student, after all. That means I am your teacher for life. Go ahead and take a rest. I will bring you home to take back what is rightfully yours when you are feeling better." "Miss Sinclair..." Abby didn't know what to say despite how grateful she was, so she started to get up to give her teacher a respectful bow when Elise stopped her. "Alright, alright. There's no need to do this for appearance's sake." Elise firmly pressed down on her.

"You better make sure you stay alive. I won't have a legitimate reason to help if you die. All of the hardships you have to endure now would go to waste then."

"I understand," Abby replied as she sniffled.

"I will make sure I recover. You are my role model, Miss Sinclair. I am sure I will be able to stand on my own one day!"

"And I believe you will"

Elise lightly patted Abby on her arm as she added gently, "It is late now. Go ahead and sleep. Rest up!"

Elise seemed a little absent-minded after coming out of the hospital.

Noticing this, Alexander joked, "Weren't you just giving out advice like a proper adult earlier? Why are you the one being down in the dumps now?"

"I am not unhappy"

She looked up at the moon and let out a long sigh.

"I am just thinking that there are too many sufferings in this world. I'm a mess as well, but I can't seem to get used to watching people suffer."

He raised his hand and caressed her on her head.

"This is probably why God gave you so many talents. You have never been arrogant and you empathize with others. You have no idea the warmth you bring to this world with your presence alone."

Elise felt like a cat when he gently did that. Her mood, too, somehow got a lot better after that.

This was probably because of the hormones released —like how cats felt when they were petted.

"Aren't you a sweet talker today, Mr. Griffith?" she teased.

"You're right. Do you know why?"

He swiftly scooped her into his embrace.

Seeing him playing along with her, she smilingly looked up at him and asked,

"Why?"

"Because..."

Alexander lowered his head and, out of nowhere, pecked her on her cupid's bow.

His gaze was utterly gentle when he murmured, "Cos you are sweet."

Under the 10-square-meter iron shed in Salt Stone City's mine were piles of freshly mined jadeite rough stones.

Alexander, who had Kenneth's mask on, and Elise stood beside the stones.

The pillar in the middle was their dividing line that separated the stones into two piles.

"I am picking the one on the left, and you take the right one. The victor is whoever picks out a Peculiar Jadeite first, or the most Peculiar Jadeite within 10 minutes,"

Elise confidently announced the rules of the competition.

Alexander folded his hands on his chest and raised his left eyebrow at that.

"Mrs. Griffith, do you think it is fair when there are obviously more stones on your side than mine?"

The corners of Elise's lips curled, and she puffed her chest out as she turned to look at him.

“Are you sure you want to talk about fairness with your wife, Mr.Griffith?”

“Alright, alright.”

He could only let out a resigned sigh.

“I am not going to win anyway...”

However, the competition ended with a tie between the two who found two Peculiar Jadeite each.

“We have managed to find four Peculiar Jadeite in just this pile of rough stones.I wonder how many more are there in the unexplored mines.It seems that the effect of radiation is getting more and more widespread.It is probably time to properly inspect Salt Stone City”

Looking at the mine in the distance, Elise and Alexander fell into contemplation while holding the Peculiar Jadeite in their hands.

Alexander headed to another mining area for some business dealings when night fell.

Having nothing better to do, Elise went on a stroll around town, where she randomly entered a bistro for a relaxing night out.Her glass of alcoholic beverage was served at the same time a bar singer went on stage.She picked up her glass but as soon as her eyes fell on the stage, she immediately placed it back down on the table.She couldn't believe how she was meeting one acquaintance after another in this small city.

The stage only held one woman, who was holding an electric guitar and singing soulfully.

Her every movement and expression perfectly interpreted all the emotions the song was conveying.

The woman sang a total of two songs and by the end of her performance, she bowed to thank the audience before she began to pack her things.

However, a male guest swayed his way to the stage with a wine glass in his hand right at this moment, as if to invite her to drink.

“My job is to sing.I don't do escorting.I apologize, as I can't accept your drink,” the woman insisted stubbornly despite the man being intimidating.

Upon rejection, the man swiftly threw the alcohol at her and started making a commotion, as though he was ready to get physical with her.

Luckily, the owner of the establishment realized it just in time, and he got his men to step forward and stop the drunkard.

It took them a good amount of appeasing him to finally calm him down.

The woman, however, was done packing up, and had left without apologizing nor asking for an apology.It was as though nothing out of the norm had happened.

Elise quickly went after the woman and when she caught up to her, Elise saw that the woman was tying her guitar to a motorcycle.

Elise walked over and passed her a piece of tissue paper she coincidentally had on her.

The woman only glanced at her indifferently before she lowered her gaze and continued to fix her guitar on her motorcycle.

Seeing this, Elise took the tissue back and, as if talking to herself, she commented, “Hennessy Zea, an international movie star and an all-rounder

artist who had a bright future ahead.

You got married to Sheamus Gawin, the movie king then when you were at the top of your game.

That marriage, however, ended in rumors that destroyed your career, and you have never been able to get back on your feet.

The victim somehow became the instigator instead.”

Elise then added a brief question, “Did I get it right?”

Hennessy’s hands stopped moving after she heard all that. She leaned against her motorcycle, and rather nonchalantly asked in return, “You had me investigated?”

“You could say that.”

Elise turned in Hennessy’s direction to look at her face-to-face.

“But I can’t help but wonder—why did you so easily believe a man like Sheamus Gawin?”

“This is my private matter. It has nothing to do with you.”

Hennessy seemed reluctant to talk about the man.

“Bien, it is your freedom to not tell me.”

Elise walked over and handed Hennessy a business card.

“This is the reason I came to you. You can call and mention my name anytime you [feel like you can contribute in some way. I promise you a spectacular remuneration in return”

Right as Elise finished her words, Alexander had arrived to pick her up by the roadside across.

Elise waved her hand at him when he sounded the car horn, and she seemed to say something else to Hennessy before Elise crossed the road and got into the passenger’s seat of Alexander’s car.

“What has gotten you so happy?”

He massaged her on the crown of her head like it was a furry ball.

“How can I not be happy when I found my trump card?” she cheered.

“But she didn’t seem like she was eager to bother with you.”

The man was more realistic than she was. It was a fact that Hennessy had a naturally cold face. It happened to be the type that was all the rage as of now.

“Just you wait and see.” Elise looked ahead with an unwavering gaze.

“She will definitely come to me.”

There was no way someone who was still so passionate about music would allow themselves to die and rot away in an obscure corner.