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Steven slammed the gas pedal. His sports car was roaring through the streets as he raced back to his suburban mansion. The lights in the yard and living room were ablaze. The mansion was a beacon in the quiet night that lifted his spirits and quickened his stride as he approached.

However, the living room was empty, devoid of the warmth and welcome he'd hoped to find. A wry smile tugged at his lips, a self-deprecating chuckle escaping him.

He should've known, really. What was he even thinking?

Hannah, the woman he married in a whirlwind of passion and paperwork, was no longer the starry-eyed bride she once was. Back in those early days, he knew she'd be there, waiting for him, yet he'd linger on the ground floor, reluctant to face her.

He had deliberately crafted an image of a man about town, indulging in late nights out to fuel her misgivings.

Whenever he did come home, their only real interaction was in the bedroom. At first, she'd wait up for him, her face lighting up at his return. She'd greet him with a kiss, her enthusiasm in their intimate moments undeniable.

Afterward, curled in his arms, she'd whisper, "Steven, let's have a baby."e2

He wanted to say yes, but instead, he'd push her away, his voice cold and distant as he dressed. "Hannah, you're not fit to bear my child."

Her heartbreak was silent, but he saw it in her eyes-the shattering of her spirit.

In a twisted sense of triumph, he added, "Besides, I've had a vasectomy. You'll never carry my child."

She'd tried to smile through the pain, asking him simply, "Why?"

"Why? You want money, I want your body. It's just a transaction, Hannah. Don't you get it?" With those words, he left her alone in the vastness of their luxurious home.

He had no idea how she spent that night, but the next day, her eyes were swollenbetraying a night drowned in tears.

His treatment of her hadn't stopped there. It wasn't until he saw how Skyler would rather turn to ash than stay with Zavier that he realized the extent of his cruelty.

Steven thought he'd had an timely epiphany, that it wasn't too late, that agreeing to a divorce might mend the fractures he'd caused.

But all of that was just what he thought.

To truly love someone is never to harm them.

Now, standing outside Hannah's door, Steven reached for the knob only to find it locked. He had a key, and could easily let himself in, but this time, he chose not to invade her space. As he turned to leave, the door swung open from the inside.

He spun around, his surprise melting into delight at the sight of Hannah, looking cozy in her fluffy hoodie pajamas. "Hannah!"

"Can we talk?" She asked.

"Of course. Whatever you want to discuss, I'm here," Steven replied eagerly.

"Are you hungry?"

"Are you? I can whip up something for us. No need to bother Milana with a late-night snack," he offered.

Hannah began to descend the stairs. "It's fine. I'll just throw something together for myself."

Over the years, with her acting career keeping her busy, Steven had never seen her cook a thing. "You can cook?" He asked, a note of genuine curiosity in his voice.

Without a word, Hannah continued on her way.