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"Ms. Berry, I doubt my mother has anything to do with Lottie's disappearance," Lochlan frantically insisted before rushing over to the glass case in an attempt to save Mrs. Fraser.

However, the men dressed in black stood their ground and didn't allow him to get close.

"Mr. Lochlan, as long as your mother tells me what I want to know, everything will be easily resolved. Or... are you not worried about Charlotte at all?" Ashlyn lowered her eyes and sighed. "I guess Mrs. Fraser really is just too stubborn."

She waved her hand and Anderson immediately brought a laptop over to her. She turned it on, then pointed the screen towards Lochlan and his father.

"This shows Mrs. Fraser's whereabouts during the day. She left the Fraser house very early in the morning and didn't even ask the family driver to send her. Instead, she grabbed a taxi and went to Lochlan's mansion."

Lochlan and Mr. Fraser both leaned in to take a closer look at the screen where there were multiple images of Mrs. Fraser.

A look of alarm crossed Mr. Fraser's face. The usually calm middle-aged man stared at Ashlyn in disbelief. "You... Where did you get all of this?"

"You think this is difficult?" Ashlyn curled her lips into a sneer. "The only reason I'm here now is because Charlotte disappeared at an intersection without any surveillance cameras."

Lochlan's heart skipped a beat. "What did you say? Lottie disappeared at an intersection without any cameras? But... But it's raining so heavily! If anything happened to her, I would never forgive myself!"

Ashlyn ignored Lochlan. Her impression of him had turned from 'not bad' to 'utterly despicable.'

"So Mrs. Fraser, are you going to tell me what you did to Charlotte?" asked Ashlyn in an intimidating tone.

Cold sweat broke out over Mrs. Fraser's body. Both her clothes and her hair were matted with sweat. She hadn't gone into the rain, and yet somehow it looked like she had.

After being threatened by the venomous scorpions for so long, she barely had any strength left to speak. It took her a while before she could squeeze out some words. "I... I only said a few words to her. She probably couldn't handle it and ran away by herself."

"Looks like Mrs. Fraser isn't planning on telling the truth." Ashlyn waved her hand, and two strong men

immediately pushed Mrs. Fraser towards the glass case again.

“No! No, please, Lochlan, save me!” Mrs. Fraser had barely caught her breath when she found herself staring death right in the eye again.

Her screams echoed through the vast living room.

Lochlan was getting pretty frantic, but he was no match for the men at all. He turned to Ashlyn and spat, “Ms. Berry, I know you’re only doing this for Lottie. But she is still my mother. She hasn’t done anything unforgivable, and you’re not an executioner either! So why must you be so ruthless?”

“Ruthless? Me?” scoffed Ashlyn. “Look at all the blood on the floor. Your mother looks perfectly fine, which means that blood can only be from Charlotte. She’s my student, so I am responsible for her. And I will make sure she gets her justice!”

“Mom, what did you do to Lottie? Just tell us, then Ms. Berry will let you go.”

Lochlan couldn’t help but feel like there were two sides pulling at him internally. On one hand, he didn’t believe that his mother really did anything to harm Charlotte, and he was feeling very sorry for what Ashlyn was putting her through.

On the other hand, he was also worried about Charlotte and feared that something terrible had happened to her.

Feelings of anxiousness and restlessness were consuming him.

It hadn’t even been a day and Lochlan already looked nothing like his former proud firefighter self.

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At that moment, he merely looked like one of those useless husbands stuck between his mother and the wife.

“I didn’t do anything... I really didn’t do anything!” cried Mrs. Fraser weakly.

There was no way she was going to spill the truth in front of Lochlan. She couldn’t bear for him to hate her.

The little b***h was just too important to her son. If she admitted to everything now, that would mean that all her suffering would have been in vain.

The current Mrs. Fraser no longer bore any resemblance to the dignified and graceful woman from earlier. Instead, she looked completely disheveled while slumped on the floor.

“Ms. Berry, I know you are Charlotte’s teacher. However, from the moment my son brought her home,

we've been feeding her and clothing her. When she was sick, we brought her to the doctor. When she was in pain, we comforted her. I don't understand why you think I have anything to do with her disappearance just because I went to the mansion!" wailed Mrs. Fraser as tears ran down her face.

Though she was speaking to Ashlyn, her eyes never left Lochlan. "I might not like her, but at the end of the day, the Fraser family has raised her for so many years. How could I possibly do anything to harm her?"

Mrs. Fraser then broke down even more, as if she had suffered a great wrong.

Lochlan couldn't bear to see his mother like this, so he crouched down next to her and hugged her tightly.

"Mom, please don't cry. We'll find Lottie soon. I'm sure she'll be okay."

"I... I'm like every other mother. I don't have any other wish other than to see my son get married and for my daughter-in-law to give me a cute and healthy grandchild. All I wanted was for Charlotte to move back in with me when my son gets a girlfriend. But she refused, so I scolded her a little. Was that really wrong of me? I swear I only had our family's best interest at heart!"

Mrs. Fraser was bawling so hard she could barely catch her breath at this point.

The sight brought tears to Mr. Fraser's eyes too. "Ms. Berry, you've made quite the scene today. I can promise you that us Frasers won't take this lying down!"

Mrs. Fraser pushed Lochlan aside and ran up to Ashlyn. "Ms. Berry, if you still won't believe me, then I'll just have to jump into the glass case."

With that, she gathered all her strength and leaped into the case before anyone even had a chance to stop her.

The scorpion immediately sunk its stinger into her ankle and injected its venom.

Ashlyn's eyes narrowed at the sight.

She hadn't expected Mrs. Fraser to be that relentless.

However, she still refused to believe that things were as Mrs. Fraser claimed to be. If she really is innocent, then where did the blood come from? Who did it come from?

"Mom!"

"Honey!"

The two Fraser men ran over and dragged Mrs. Fraser out of the glass case.

But it was already too late. The venom was already flowing through her and tainted, black blood was gushing out of her wound.

Despite so, she still gathered her breath to confront Ashlyn. "Ms. Berry, do you believe me now?"

"You impress me, Mrs. Fraser." Ashlyn waved her hand, and Anderson immediately walked up to the Frasers. He handed Lochlan a vial and instructed, "This is the antidote. Drink it, and you'll be cured within three days."

"Mrs. Fraser, I'll trust you for the time being. And I sincerely hope that you don't disappoint me." Ashlyn got up and her gaze swept over the Frasers. "Since I didn't manage to get anything useful out of you, and since you decided to use such a ruthless manner to prove your innocence, I'll gift you the A Block at Mossy Lake in return."

With that, she threw a bunch of keys to Lochlan.

A whole building?

Just who is this woman?

Ashlyn curled her lips upwards but the smile didn't reach her eyes. "If at any point I find out that Mrs. Fraser lied today, not only will I take back the building, but I'll also make sure the whole Fraser family pays dearly for it."

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With that, Ashlyn spun around and walked out.

One of her men hurried behind her with an umbrella, while the others quietly grabbed the glass case before following Ashlyn out into the rain.

Mrs. Fraser closed her eyes and breathed a huge sigh of relief. Then, as if she had been drained of all her energy, she collapsed onto the floor.

"Mom! Mom!" Lochlan hurriedly carried her over to the couch then called their personal doctor.

Mr. Fraser's hand trembled as he clutched onto Mrs. Fraser's. "Just what did we do to deserve any of this? Lochlan, who is that woman?"

Lochlan sighed. "Dad, I only know that her name is Ashlyn Berry and that she's close with Lucas Nolan. Oh, and with Mr. Field too. She's the producing director for the National Day Gala Night and won the rating war for that night."

"Hmm... There's more than meets the eye with that woman. We need to find out everything we can about her," said Mr. Fraser as a glint of hatred flashed across his eyes.

Do you really think one building is enough to make me forget how you humiliated my wife today, Ashlyn Berry? Dream on!

Meanwhile, Lucas had been waiting for Ashlyn in front of Bayview Villa for the whole day. He even had people checking all the cars that went by, but there was still no sign of Ashlyn.

He had been waiting there since the night before. But the whole villa was completely empty. Even the bodyguards who were usually around were all gone.

Lucas continued to stare at the pouring rain, and he could feel his heart plummeting.

His eyes darkened as he ordered, "Have everyone we have out searching for her."

Ashlyn, I don't care where you're hiding. I will find you even if you're at the ends of the earth.

After Spencer passed the order along, he turned to ask, "Mr. Nolan, are we going home now?"

They had been sitting in Lucas' Bentley for a whole day and a whole night, and Lucas hadn't even had a sip of water throughout.

He knew his boss was worried about Ms. Berry, but he still couldn't allow him to wreck his body.

Lucas' eyes narrowed a little before answering, "We're going back to Whitland Villa."

Since she wasn't here, there was no point in him sticking around.

However, just as the Bentley made a U-turn, tens of luxury cars pulled up in front of Bayview Villa. A tall, muscular man stepped out of a white Land Rover. He was carrying a woman bridal-style, and the woman's arms were wrapped around his neck.

Lucas exhaled sharply, and he pursed his lips together tightly.

He stared intensely at the man and the woman.

She's letting another man hold her so intimately?

Darn it!

Anderson looked down at the pale-faced woman in his arms and his heart ached for her.

His boss hadn't been able to hold on any longer and had fallen into a deep sleep the moment she left

the Fraser house.

Charlotte wasn't in any way related to Ashlyn, so he couldn't understand why she was putting in so much effort to find the former, despite how unwell she was. And she didn't care about offending the Frasers either.

A sigh escaped his lips as he strode into the villa's living room.

Suddenly, a tall figure appeared in front of him. A man with a piercing gaze stared at him and the woman in his arms. The man's jaw was clenched tightly, and his tone was ice cold when he said, "Only I can hold her."

With that, the man stuck his hands out and snatched Ashlyn away from him.

Anderson looked down at his suddenly empty arms. It took him a few seconds before he regained his composure. "Mr. Nolan? What... What are you doing here?"

Meanwhile, Ashlyn — who had been feeling very cold earlier — suddenly felt like she was being shoved into an oven.

She instinctively wanted to absorb more of the heat, so her arms found the man's waist and clung to it tightly.

Even with clothes in the way, she could clearly sense how muscular and broad the man's chest was. She could also feel his strong heartbeat thumping against her.

It felt so familiar and so calming...

Instantly, Ashlyn fell into a deeper sleep.

The man's expression softened as his gaze lingered on her perfect little face. After a few seconds, he turned his attention back onto Anderson.

With a domineering tone that left no space for any second-guessing, he said, "She's been poisoned with the Backtrack poison."

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Anderson's heart clenched. Lucas was staring at him, and there was a look in his eyes that suggested he already knew everything. Thus, Anderson found himself unable to utter even one word otherwise.

"So I guess it's true." Seeing Anderson's reaction, Lucas was able to confirm his suspicion immediately.

With Ashlyn nestled carefully in his arms, he strode up the stairs then placed her gently on the large bed.

He gazed at her affectionately, then he lightly took hold of her hand that had donned a see-through glove.

His eyes fluttered when he laid eyes on the black mark in the center of her palm.

He moved his gaze upwards until it reached her upper arm. The black marks had already reached the topmost of her arm, and her previously fair skin looked frighteningly black.

Lucas clenched his jaw tightly, and the pain he was feeling was visible in his eyes. He couldn't even imagine what kind of suffering Ashlyn was going through.

She's been silently enduring all this while...

He carefully rolled her sleeve back down, then pulled her glove up properly.

Lucas then went into the bathroom to take a quick, hot shower before lying down on the bed and pulling her into his arms.

There was a natural, manly air about Lucas that was very alluring.

Thus Ashlyn was able to sleep very soundly in his arms. She felt both safe and warmed.

Lucas, on the other hand, found it hard to fall asleep. He didn't even know what time it was before the darkness finally claimed him.

Ashlyn was startled awake by Lucas' muffled roar.

By the faint glow of the night light, she was able to make out the pained expression on Lucas' face.

She instinctively furrowed her brows at the sight.

What's he doing in my bed?

"No... No! Don't!"

"Grace!"

He's having a nightmare?

Ashlyn reached for the tissue box on the nightstand and pulled out a few sheets so she could wipe the sweat off of the man's forehead.

But before she even touched him, his eyes abruptly flew open, and she saw bloodlust in them.

His expression was caked in iciness, and he looked like someone who had just crawled out of hell.

Ashlyn raised an eyebrow at him. "Lucas, you're having a bad dream."

Lucas stared at her with bloodshot eyes. He then closed them for a few seconds before opening them again. "I'm sorry. Did I scare you?"

He didn't know why, but the events of his past had invaded his dreams.

"No. Why are you here?" asked Ashlyn as she narrowed her eyes at him.

Lucas took a deep breath, then promptly got out of bed to take a cold shower.

Only when he lay back down in bed again did he feel like he had gotten his emotions back under control.

"I dreamt about my older sister." He stuck his arm out and pulled Ashlyn close to him. "I haven't dreamt about her in so many years."

"You have another older sister?" Ashlyn had always thought that Lucas only had his two younger siblings — Blair and Naomi.

"Yes. One year, our family went on a hiking trip. Somehow, me and my sister got split up from everyone else, and we were cornered by some human traffickers. It was actually a little girl who saved us. She was very strong and very smart. Even at such a young age, she already knew how to make an explosive of some sort and used it to knock the human traffickers unconscious. Then, she untied me and my sister. However, the explosive wasn't that strong, and the traffickers came to soon enough. They came after us, and my sister accidentally fell off a cliff during the chase."

Lucas' voice was very heavy and raspy. Those were memories he never wanted to revisit.

Ashlyn tilted her head to face him. She never expected Lucas to share something like that with her.

After all, everyone had their deepest darkest secrets that they wouldn't want anyone to know.

Moreover, she wasn't someone who liked digging into other people's private business.

But at that very moment, she wanted for him to continue. "What happened next? Did you find your sister?" she asked.

"She died." Lucas' eyes darkened at the painful memory as he stared at the ceiling with hollow eyes.

"The little girl who saved told me to hide in a cave while she diverted the traffickers' attention. She said she was very familiar with the mountains, so she would be fine. I'll never forget the moment when she turned around and flashed me a reassuring smile. It was such an innocent and bright smile."

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"I never knew you had gone through something like this. It's a good thing the little girl was around to save you." Ashlyn's heart rate suddenly picked up its pace. For some reason, when Lucas spoke about the little girl, fragmented memories suddenly flashed across her mind.

Mountains... Forests...

She didn't manage to grasp hold of the fleeting thoughts before hearing Lucas continue, "I fell asleep in the cave afterward, and my parents managed to find me. I didn't see the little girl again, so I started looking for her."

"Did you ever find her?"

"I did. It turned out to be Hera. But... she's completely unrecognizable. She's no longer the kind and brave little girl from back then," lamented Lucas as he closed his eyes. "My sister was pronounced dead as well. For all these years, her death has weighed heavily on me. If I had just managed to grab on to her in time, then she wouldn't have died."

"You were a child back then too. Her death isn't on you." Ashlyn reached out to take Lucas' hand in hers and gave it a little squeeze. "It was an accident."

"Seeing my sister fall to her death has been too traumatic." Lucas' eyes had reddened. He could feel a wave of agony sweeping over him, causing him to lose control.

His breathing became haggard. He couldn't handle the frustration and anxieties that were surging through him, so he leaped out of bed and gave the wall a violent punch.

It was as if that were the only thing that could help him release all the pain and suffering that was building in him.

Bang!

Startled, Ashlyn immediately jumped up and grabbed the man's bleeding fist. "Lucas, have you lost it?"

"This is Bayview Villa. It's not your house! Keep it together!"

There was a wildness to Lucas right then, especially with his black hair falling messily across his forehead. The emptiness and the anxiety in him was taking control.

"Let go!"

"Lucas! Don't let your negative emotions control you! Pull yourself together, Lucas!"

The man let out a beastly roar. "I said... Let! Go! Aaaah!"

That was when Ashlyn realized something. Lucas is having a mania episode!

Ashlyn wrapped her arms around his waist tightly. This was the first time for her to encounter this while being fully conscious.

“Let go of me!” Lucas grabbed her chin forcefully. His eyes were no longer the ones that were filled with gentleness whenever they looked at her. Instead, there were only fury and bloodlust in them.

“Lucas!”

Ashlyn was feeling both frantic and angry. The Lucas in front of her had lost all sense of sanity. He was very likely not going to listen to anything she said.

Worry flashed across her eyes. What do I do?

Lucas, in his current state, was especially strong. He was clamping down on her chin so hard that it was hurting her quite a bit.

Just as she felt that her chin was about to be crushed, she threw all thoughts from her mind, stood on her tiptoes, and planted her soft lips on the man’s thin ones.

When the familiar presence invaded his senses, Lucas immediately shuddered as if a jolt of electricity was coursing through him.

“Lucas, wake up!”

The only thing that Lucas could grasp onto was Ashlyn’s whispers and the fragrance of her body.

He didn’t know what it was, but somehow, he felt as if something was finally subduing the intense pain in his head.

His sanity had been more or less eroded by all the negative thoughts and feelings earlier.

But now that he was hearing the woman’s gentle whispers in his ear, it felt like something was pulling him back.

However, Lucas’ body gradually stiffened again. The manic expression he had on his face was eerily horrifying, and his chilling gaze was like that of a monster’s.

Ashlyn stood silently in front of him. There wasn’t even one shred of humanity left in his icy gaze, and it very nearly froze her to the spot.

Is... Is this the real Lucas?

Time slowed down to a stop, and the only thing that could be heard in the room were the two sets of breathing.

Ashlyn noticed that Lucas' stare was getting more and more savage, so she closed her eyes and leaned in to kiss him again.

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If kissing Lucas could snap him out of it, Ashlyn wouldn't mind giving him a thousand more kisses.

Lucas pushed Ashlyn aside with whatever strength left in him. He had the side of his torso leaned against the wall.

Lucas was in a lot of pain. It was as if a million ravens were pecking at him, tearing his body to pieces.

He was on the brink of losing his mind.

Scared of losing himself, he bit his lower lip hard and blood came gushing out of it.

"Lucas, please wake up! Don't let your negative emotions get the best of you!" Ashlyn exclaimed before she was given another forceful shove by Lucas and she fell onto the ground.

Ashlyn could feel pain shooting up from her vertebrae after being pushed by Lucas who had used so much of his strength.

Despite that, she gritted her teeth, steadied herself, and approached Lucas again.

Lucas was usually indifferent to the world around him. It was rare for him to get emotional.

Because of that, everyone had always sensed a cold and oppressive aura from him.

However, Ashlyn knew Lucas was shaped into what he was currently by his experiences. He was not born with such a personality. There was a reason behind his mania.

Nonetheless, at that moment in time, Ashlyn did not have time to figure out whether his manic behavior was due to the death of his elder sister or something else.

She put herself in front of Lucas' bestial eyes just as Lucas shouted, "Get out!"

Ashlyn put on her transparent gloves and held Lucas' jaw firmly in one hand. She had her eyes locked onto his, and imposingly she uttered, "Lucas Nolan! Wake up, now! Listen to me! I am Ashlyn Berry, your wife!"

She could clearly feel the fury that was emanating from him. It was menacing, but still, Ashlyn was not intimidated.

She tried to unbutton his shirt with a calm front, but her hands would not stop trembling, betraying what she was actually feeling.

Lucas was hard to keep still. He had the strength of ten oxen as he was a disciplined combat specialist that had never once skimped on physical training.

Ashlyn had a feeling that her body would not be able to withstand another one of his pushes. In the rampant state that he was in, Lucas might accidentally kill Ashlyn if he went on a rampage.

Yet, there was an inner voice in her that was nagging at her to not leave Lucas' side now as he was falling into darkness.

It was the first time in forever since Ashlyn had the intention to stay by Lucas' side. It was the first time she realized he needed her, but the clock was ticking.

Ashlyn wrinkled her nose. For some reason, she was having a hard time trying to take off Lucas' clothes as her hand had started to shake with greater intensity.

By now, Lucas had torn out a whole chunk of his lower lip from biting on it. The pain managed to snap him out from his manic state for an instant. Lucas squinted his eyes as if he couldn't recognize the woman before him. He stuttered, "Honey... is that you?"

Right away he knew he must have gotten into a fit again.

I can't hurt Ashlyn!

He stretched out his arms in an attempt to hug Ashlyn, but in the next moment, he pushed her away instead. This time, however, he was much less forceful.

"Go! Stay away from me!"

The fresh blood dripped off from Lucas' lower lip onto the floor.

"Do you not understand my instructions?" Lucas raised his arm to push Ashlyn again, but this time, she caught his arm and stared at him with her fiery eyes. "Lucas Nolan! Get ahold of yourself! I am Ashlyn!"

"Honey... please leave me now!" Again, Lucas felt his body pricked by a thousand needles. He screamed in agony, "Aaaaah!"

He howled like a lion that was caught in a beartrap and punched the wall again and again. Seconds later, the whole place reeked of fresh blood.

His black shirt had fallen apart to revealed his muscular body. Every muscle and tendon in his body seemed to be roaring in anger.

The immense pain made Lucas bit on his fist as if that could relieve him of his suffering.

Ashlyn's whole body started to tremor at the sight of Lucas' manic appearance.

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You would rather hurt yourself to protect me? You're gonna tear the flesh off your hand!

Ashlyn decided that she could not watch on as Lucas tortured himself.

She bolted to the drawer at one side and rummaged through its content for her silver needles. Where the hell is it when I need it the most? Didn't I use it just a few days ago?

"Are you looking for this?"

All of a sudden, she heard a man's voice coming from behind.

She turned her head around in puzzlement and saw Lucas clenching onto her silver needles in one hand.

She was stunned. "Why... do you have my silver needles?"

"Hehehe! Do you think I will just let these needles hang around? Do you know how much it hurts the last time you used them on me?" The metallic smell of blood filled the air.

Lucas' eyes had a vicious glow in them as they sized up Ashlyn.

The way he stared at Ashlyn was so eerie that she felt uncomfortable. Since when did Lucas get his hands on my silver needles?

"Lucas? Have you regain your senses?"

"This piece of body sure is a fine specimen, but too bad it is nothing but a tool for me."

What the hell is he talking about?

Ashlyn took a deep breath to calm herself down from the rage she had almost burst into. She had to remind herself that Lucas was not being himself right now.

She was not worried whatsoever. The silver needles were not the only card she had in her hand.

The man cackled. "Are you so needy of love that you undress me? Pfft, here I thought his woman was

someone remarkable. Turns out, she's just a lustful skank."

Ashley was deeply confused by the man in front of her. Lucas was now bathed in blood and the diabolical scowl on his face made him look like a completely different person.

He was a far cry from the handsome, nonchalant prince she married four years ago, and he was also nothing like his recent overbearing and unfriendly self.

It was as if he was possessed by some evil spirit.

She glanced at the unfamiliar man before her and asked, "Who are you?"

"If I tell you who I am, will you sleep with me?" The man approached Ashlyn and held her in his arms.

Ashlyn was now both perplexed and completely lost. A sense of foreboding was beginning to rise within her.

Could it be... That Lucas have some other illnesses that I do not know of?

No, it can't be!

Ashlyn was flabbergasted. She needed to confirm whether the person in front of her was Lucas. "Are you Lucas Nolan?"

"Of course I am!" Lucas stared at her impassively. Suddenly, he broke into a crazy fit of laughter. In a flash, he scooped Ashlyn off her feet and threw her onto the bed.

The next second, the man pressed himself down on Ashlyn. He had a maniacal grin on his face. "Didn't you want to seduce me? What are you waiting for?"

Ashlyn had to admit that even as a psycho, Lucas was still as handsome as ever.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that she would just give up without putting up a fight.

"I'm sorry, I don't sleep with any other men except for Lucas! You might have possessed his body, but you are still not him!"

Ashlyn writhed her lips and smiled cunningly as she eyed the window.

She grasped the man's neck with both of her hands and held him still in front of her.

Before the man had time to react, a few drops of an unknown liquid was squirted onto Lucas' face from outside the window.

He shut both his eyes in an instant and rolled onto the floor.

Jared Quickton jumped into the room through the window and wiped the sweat off his forehead.

“Boss, my aim was impeccable, right?”

“Mm-hmm. All your training is useful after all.” Ashlyn got off the bed and praised Jared.

Then, the door creaked open. Harrison and Anderson walked in. “Boss, what’s wrong with Lucas? His illness seemed very serious.”

“His mania is at work again.” Ashlyn made a gesture to her subordinates with one hand. “Lift him up.”

Jared and the rest had heard a lot of commotion coming from the room earlier, but still, they waited calmly for their chance to make a strike.

When Ashlyn unintentionally saw Jared hiding under the window’s ledge, she purposely let Lucas throw herself onto the bed so that Lucas was within Jared’s shooting range. The few droplets of liquid were special anesthesia made to knock people out in one whiff.

As potent as it was, the anesthesia was harmless to humans.

“Lucas’ outburst is so scary this time. Plus, his strength is crazy! It brings chills to my bones to see such a beast going on a rampage.” Jared shuddered as he recalled the scene he saw just now.

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Even Boss can’t tame this man!

“Actually, it’s all my fault for bringing up his past.”

After all that hustle, Ashlyn was fatigued. She sat on the side of the bed. “Is there any news on Charlotte’s whereabouts?”

“Nope. It’s like she has vanished into thin air.” Anderson shook his head.

“For some reason, I find Charlotte endearing. It’s like she’s my biological sister.” Ashlyn sighed. “I hope she is safe and sound.”

“Hurts! It hurts!”

Somewhere else, a girl on a bed was fluttering her eyes open.

Charlotte Lynch stared blankly at the white ceiling above her.

Where is this?

She blinked her big eyes and gave her surrounding a once-over. Everything was unfamiliar to her.

The room had minimal décor. There was a flower vase on the nightstand and inside it were a few stalks of sunflower.

Right across from the bed was a pastel pink wardrobe.

The curtains were also pink. There were a few stars printed on the cloth.

Is this some girl's room?

She propped herself up with her hands on the bed.

Then, Charlotte realized that even the cushy bed she was lying on was pink in color. Not only that, all of the linens and covers were pink too.

There was a gigantic red heart in the middle of the bedsheet, and it was surrounded by a few smaller hearts.

Although Charlotte had stayed with the Frasers for a long time, her room had never been this girly.

Suddenly, she felt a sting on her cheek. It instantly reminded her of the terrible incident that had happened.

"My face..." She stumbled off the bed and rushed to the bathroom.

When she opened the door, what greeted her sight was a man currently drying himself with a pink towel in the middle of the bathroom.

"Ah!"

Charlotte was taken aback.

Her scream was ear-piercingly loud and sharp.

Joseph Field was just about to put on his clothes when Charlotte barged in all of a sudden. Fortunately, he was quick to react. In seconds, he had put his hands over his crotch and threw the towel in front of his waist.

Charlotte was frozen in her spot.

She stared at the well-built man in front of her in bewilderment. His washboard abs huddled close to

each other on his abdomen. On top of his muscular chest were a few water droplets that he had not dried off. All of these were probably a result of Joseph's frequent workout sessions.

Charlotte could feel her cheeks getting hot. She faltered as she didn't know where to place her gaze at.

It was her first time seeing a male stranger's body, not to mention the close proximity between the two of them. Charlotte was so shy that she failed to find it amusing that a hunk was desperately trying to cover himself with a small pink towel.

All she wanted to do at that moment was to find a hole to crawl into and hide.

There was a slight bit of awkwardness on Joseph's handsome face as he tried his best to cover more of his body with the small towel he had. It was all his mother's fault for preparing such a small towel for that particular bathroom.

Joseph's slender legs did not know where to go next, so he merely stood motionless in his place.

He never expected that a girl who was in a coma for so long would wake up just in time to see him walk out from the shower naked.

Joseph blushed even more when he realized Charlotte's eyes were still on him. He had never been in an even more awkward situation than this. When is this girl gonna look away?

However, it seemed to him that the young girl was even more traumatized than he was.

Joseph pieced himself together and tried to explain why he was in Charlotte's bathroom. "Um... my shower head is broken so I borrowed your bathroom. Do not worry for I do not have any ill intentions!"

Charlotte was staring at the floor in front of her. She was trying to avoid making eye contact with Joseph at all costs.

Out of the blue, the scene she saw just now reappeared in her mind.

In her mind, Joseph's body was like a Greek statue. But what made Charlotte blush the most was actually how well-endowed Joseph was.

It was the first time Charlotte had seen the male genitalia.

Charlotte realized her face was as red as a tomato and she hurriedly covered her face with both her hands.

Just as the two of them were still trapped in that uncomfortable situation, the bedroom's door suddenly swung open.

Mrs. Field rushed into the room worriedly. "What happened?"

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When Mrs. Field got a clear view of the room, her eyes widened and she instantly gave Joseph a hard slap on his chest.

"You hooligan! Why are you in Jeunette's room, and why are you naked? What are you trying to do? Oh my God, that towel was meant for Jeunette, not you! "

Joseph replied softly in a tone of grievance. "Mom... My shower head is broken."

Mrs. Field could clearly see the red mark of her slap on Joseph's chest, but she did not feel the least bit sorry about it.

"Why didn't you shower in my room then? Why did you feel the need to come all the way here to take a bath?"

"That's because you and dad were in the bathroom just now..." Joseph stared at Mrs. Field with a suggestive gaze.

Mrs. Field's face immediately turned red. Did Joseph see what I was doing with his dad?

How embarrassing!

Still, she was Joseph's mother and that gave her every right in the world to chastise him. "I don't care! You get out of here this instant! Get dressed before you come back!"

Joseph grunted in annoyance and left the room.

Now that Joseph was out of sight, Mrs. Field turned to Charlotte who was sitting on the bed.

The wound on her right face had closed up, but it was still swollen. Despite that, Mrs. Field could tell how pretty Charlotte was from the left side of her complete face that was unblemished and fair.

Charlotte was in a miserable mood, but weirdly, after seeing Mrs. Field's motherly interaction with her son lightened her mood.

Nonetheless, her right face still had a stinging sensation incited by her injury. It brought back unpleasant recollections about what happened to her.

Mrs. Field sat next to her and held her hands gently. However, Charlotte subconsciously retracted her hands right away.

She lowered her head to avoid Mrs. Field's gaze.

Naturally, Mrs. Field could sense Charlotte's reluctance to open up to her. She did not press her and spoke softly instead. "I don't know what's your name, so I called you Jeunette. In my home town, Jeunette means a young girl who's still not ready to leave home. Can you tell me where you live so we can send you home? Your mom and dad must be worried sick about you."

Home?

The light in Charlotte's eyes wavered. Do I have a home?

Since when did I ever have a home to return to?

Charlotte had always thought that Uncle Lochlan's house was her home.

But the stone-cold reality had shattered that notion of hers time and again.

In the end, she was nothing but a lonely orphan who didn't have a mom and a dad to love her.

"Don't worry, my child! We are not bad people. You have slept in this room for two days since the day my son brought you back." Mrs. Field reassured Charlotte in a tone of patience. She then laid her eyes on Charlotte's face. "Do you remember how you injured your face?"

I must be so hideous right now!

Tears started to well up in Charlotte's eyes. She sat motionless on the bed, and soon enough, her tears broke the dam and trickled down her cheeks.

Mrs. Field sighed. "My child, don't cry. There are still many things that can bring us joy in this world. Anyway, you must be hungry, right? Let me make you something in the kitchen."

She then left Charlotte alone and headed to the kitchen.

Half an hour later, Mrs. Field carried a tray to Charlotte's room. There were a few dishes on the tray.

"I made all of these myself. I hope you will like it!"

Charlotte was a little startled by how much Mrs. Field had brought her. In the middle of the tray was a big bowl of chicken soup. There were a small serving of Russian potato salad and a few slices of sourdough bread at the side.

The faint aroma of the food drifted into Charlotte's nasal cavity and her eyes instantly brightened.

This smells familiar!

Who made this for me before?

Nevertheless, Charlotte was unable to recall anything at the moment.

She didn't have much appetite before, but the few dishes in front of her had awakened her hunger. With a flick of her hand, she picked up the spoon and scooped a few mouthfuls of soup.

The chicken soup tasted familiar. Charlotte felt that she had tried it before as a kid.

Yet, she was very sure she had not met this woman in front of her before.

Why does it taste so familiar?

Mrs. Field smiled in contentment when she saw Charlotte eagerly eating her food. "Eat more if you like it, dear. You've got to eat more so you can recover faster!"

Mrs. Field's eyes twinkled endearingly as if she was looking at her own daughter.

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As Charlotte was eating, Mrs. Field continued to speak. "I have always dreamt of having a daughter, but alas, my wish was never granted. Though my house is small, we can still afford to have you under our roof. If you don't mind, just stay here with us, Jeunette. When you feel like going home, I'll get that brat of mine to send you back."

Charlotte remained silent as she munched on a piece of sourdough bread.

Mrs. Field looked at the girl in pity. Who has done this to you? Poor thing!

Who on Earth would be so cruel to ruin a girl's face?

Sigh. Maybe it's someone from her family that had done this to her. No wonder she doesn't want to go home. However, Mrs. Field did not want to force Charlotte to talk about her story. She knew it must be difficult for Charlotte to recount such a painful memory.

After Charlotte was done eating, Mrs. Field stacked the plates on top of one another and lifted the tray. "Rest well, my child. If you're bored you can head downstairs for a stroll. Some sunlight will do you good!"

Charlotte was still sitting on the bed in a dazed state. She did not know what to do, as she had not taken anything with her when she left the house.

The strange woman's kindness made her heart all warm and fuzzy.

She opened her mouth to thank Mrs. Field as she left the room, but what came out of her throat were heaves of dry air.

Try as she might, she could not make a sound at all.

After a few failed attempts at verbalizing, Charlotte gave up.

She could only watch as Mrs. Field closed the door to her room.

Her eyes reddened and tears flooded her eyes again.

Her heart was filled with terror. She was afraid of losing her voice forever. She could not imagine her life without her voice. However, there was nothing she could do about her muteness at the moment.

Time slowly ticked by.

A day went by in the blink of an eye.

The sky was getting darker by the minute.

Charlotte bit her lips and opened the door. A small corridor entered her vision. At the end of it was a flight of stairs.

The place was much smaller than Lochlan's, but the interior of it was very homely.

Charlotte strode towards the stairs, but before she could set one foot on it, Mrs. Field's voice rang out from downstairs.

"The doctor said her injuries will probably leave her with scars. Those needles have stayed in her face for too long. Adding to the fact that she's spent the whole day in the rain, there is a possibility that she will remain scarred for the rest of her life."

"Mom, doesn't that mean she will be permanently disfigured?" The shock in Joseph's voice was apparent.

Charlotte, who was still standing at the top of the stairwell, froze on her spot.

I am going to be permanently disfigured?

A tsunami of dismay washed over her. The strong current pulled her underwater into the deepest depth of her sorrow.

She could feel her chest convulsing in pain as she struggled to breathe.

How can I ever show up in front of Uncle Lochlan with a disfigured face? What right do I have to stay by his side?

No!

NO!

Why do I have to suffer such a fate?

Charlotte didn't know how she got herself back in the room. She laid on her bed with a heavy heart.

Suddenly, all she wanted was to play her harp. At least, when she was immersed in music, she would lose all sense of reality and forget about her pain.

Such was the importance of harp in Charlotte's life that even the mere thought of it made her smile. Yet, the smile was devoid of any emotions. Half a beat later, Charlotte closed her eyes.

Mommy! Charlotte could hear church bells ringing. Then all of a sudden, there was nothing but silence. Charlotte opened her eyes and found herself in the church. It was so quiet in the church that Charlotte could hear the people around her muttering their prayers.

It's so quiet in here! So quiet that all I can hear is Sister laughing!

She sounds so bubbly!

Sister is so smart! And she's so happy all the time. But why do I only like snowflakes? I wonder how many shapes do snowflakes come in. Mommy...

Sister said it was because my head is filled with nothing but snowflakes.

In a flash, the scene ahead of Charlotte changed.

An evil woman was charging at her with a dozen sharp needles in her hands at a terrifying speed.

"Aaaaah!"

Charlotte jolted upright. Her eyes gaped in horror.

The room had a pale yellow glow on its wall. A sheen of cold sweat was on Charlotte's forehead.

Charlotte had dreamt of her sister and her mother.

She did not know that she had a sister, but she did know that the sister in her dream had the prettiest

smile in the world.