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To Catherine, it wasn't such a bad idea to divorce Sam and then leave with her dowry, living a free life on her own.

"There's something else I want to ask you. Do you know why my mother handed Wells Properties over to Sean?" asked Shane.

In fact, he was counting on her not knowing a thing about it since she was not close with Sean.

Despite that, he still thought he would try asking anyway.

"Wells Properties?" Catherine looked visibly shocked. "Did your mother really give it to Sean?"

Seeing her reaction, Shane instantly clenched his fists, and his voice sounded strained as he went on, "You knew about it, didn't you?"

"N-Not really, but years ago, your mother did mention once that she intended to do that. I'd always assumed she wasn't serious about it, as Wells Properties was her dowry. I can't believe she actually did it." A look of jealousy washed over Catherine's face as she spoke.

Shane's fists tightened. "And what was her reason for doing so?"

"I don't know for sure, but my guess is that Sean held a special place in her heart." Catherine looked straight at Shane as she went on, "You grew up with your grandfather, and then you went overseas and received exclusive education there. In other words, you barely spent time with the other Thompsons and weren't around for over ten years. During those times, it was Sean who had stayed by your mother's side. She treated him like her own, and he was very close with her..."

Catherine trailed off, thinking about how Sean used to see Lindsay Loehr as his mother, even though it was Catherine herself who had given birth to him.

A dazed expression appeared in Shane's eyes as he listened to Catherine's explanation.

So it was Sean who had stayed by Dad and Mom's side when I was gone. Did his presence give Mom the chance to experience the joy of being a parent? Is that why she decided to give him Wells Properties?

Going by this line of logic, the whole matter was beginning to make sense to him.

Seeing Shane completely lost in his thoughts, Catherine stated, "Well, I think that's all I have to say, Shane. Now, about my divorce—"

"I approve of it, and I'll have Silas send you to the prison to meet Sam soon," Shane responded in a slightly hoarse voice, lowering his gaze slightly.

Once she heard that, Catherine's face broke into a smile. "Thank you, Shane. Thank you so much."

Without another word, Shane turned and left, heading toward his room.

The two children were on the carpet, surrounded by their toys, and Silas was having the time of his life playing with them.

As for Natalie, she was standing at the window with her back toward him, talking on the phone.

"Daddy!" shouted Connor with a smile, followed by Sharon.

Hearing that, Natalie hung up and turned around, smiling at him. "You're back."

Nodding, Shane strode toward her.

Silas immediately leaped to his feet. "I'll make a move, Mr. Shane."

"Take the children with you, please," Shane ordered.

Knowing Shane wanted a chance to talk to Natalie in private, Silas nodded and left the room with the kids, closing the door behind him.

Natalie and Shane were left alone in the room.

Walking to his side, Natalie asked, "What's wrong? Bad mood?"

Shane remained silent.

He was indeed in a bad mood, and his heart was heavy with guilt.

"Did Mrs. Thompson say something?" Pulling his hand, she led him to the bed and sat down with him.

Massaging his temples, Shane murmured, "I've finally understood why my mother let Sean take over Wells Properties."

"And why is that?" Natalie blinked at him quizzically.

Turning to look at her, Shane explained, "It's because she saw Sean as her son. Wells Properties was her gift to him from a mother to a son, not from an aunt to a nephew."

"What do you mean? Why would Mom have seen Sean as her son?" Natalie was utterly puzzled.

Shane pursed his lips. "Do you remember I once told you that I didn't grow up by my parents' side from a young age?"

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"Yes, I remember that." Natalie nodded.

Shane lowered his gaze and went on softly, "My grandfather took me away when I was three and personally raised me. Because of that, I seldom spent time with my parents. As time passed by, although we still cared about each other, we were simply not that close. Then, when I was five, my grandfather sent me to study overseas, and I got to receive the most exclusive education there. I only came back here when I was fifteen."

"That means you were gone for ten years?" Natalie looked at him.

"That's right. The technology back then wasn't half as advanced as it is now. In those ten years, I only had a few phone conversations with my parents and never saw their faces even once. In fact, even the phone calls that we had were pretty short, as we didn't have much to say to each other."

"That wouldn't be surprising considering you're a person of very few words in nature." Natalie fiddled with his fingers.

Shane let out a chuckle, but his expression turned solemn a second later. "During those ten years, it was Sean who had stayed by their side."

"I get it now. Sean took your place and played the role of your parents' filial son for ten years, and your parents were happy to have him around. So..."

"Yes. Perhaps that's why my mother let Sean take over Wells Properties instead of me. After all, I wasn't a good son to her." Shane buried his face in his hands.

Natalie wrapped her hands around his waist, comforting him, "It's true that you could have done better, but you had good reasons for your shortcomings. However, what I can't figure out is Sean. He stayed by your parents' side for ten years. It's impossible that he had no feelings toward them whatsoever. So, why didn't he stop Sam from killing them? Even if he didn't know about it in the planning stage, he should still have known about it after. So, what stopped him from exposing Sam? Surely he had no feelings toward Sam, does he?"

Shane narrowed his eyes. "We can only find out the answer when we meet Sean. I would like to know if he truly cared about my parents as well."

"But who knows where he is now?" Natalie sighed helplessly.

Shane kept quiet after that, bowing his head and losing himself in a train of thoughts.

Just then, his phone rang.

It was a call from one of the directors of the corporation.

He let Natalie go and walked to the balcony to pick up the call.

Left alone, Natalie grabbed her sketchbook from the bedside table and flipped it open to work on a few designs. The deadline set by the magazine company abroad was closing in on her.

Suddenly, a sheet fell out of her sketchbook and landed right beside her feet.

Bending down to pick it up, she saw that it wasn't one of her fashion designs but a sketch of a badge.

It was the badge that Joyce had shown her previously. She had done a rough sketch of it after she came back and intended to show it to Shane.

However, she had gotten sidetracked when she received news about Harrison and had totally forgotten about this sketch.

Just as she was scrutinizing the sketch intently, Shane came back after finishing his phone call.

"What's this?" asked Shane as he came to her side and swept a quick glance across the sheet she was holding.

Because of the poor angle, he didn't quite catch what the sketch portrayed.

Natalie handed the sheet to him. "I've told you before about the grudge between Joyce and Stanley. Well, this badge is what Joyce found at the crime scene ten years ago. It belonged to the culprit. I've wanted to show you this so that you can investigate it further but only just remembered it. Would you care to look into it?"

Taking the sheet over, Shane finally got a good look at the sketch.

The moment he saw the sketch of the badge, his expression changed dramatically as he tightened his grip on the sheet.

Seeing his reaction, Natalie stood up at once. "Darling, have you seen this badge before?"

"Yes, I've seen this on Sean." Shane's voice was cold as ice.

Natalie's eyes flickered as she repeated, "You've seen this...on Sean?"

"That's right. Sean came back from abroad a few months ago. I saw him wearing this badge on his neck."

Natalie's lips quivered. "D-Does that mean Sean has something to do with S-Stanley's parents' deaths? But how is that possible? He was only a teenager ten years ago—"

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"No, not Stanley himself, but the organization he is associated with," said Shane, cutting Natalie off.

He had always wondered what organization Sean was involved in that allowed him to traverse multiple countries freely. Now, he had finally gotten his answer.

It's this badge!

When he first saw Sean wearing it, he didn't think there was anything unusual about it. However, he thought differently now that he had seen this sketch and remembered the bad blood that Natalie had mentioned existed between Joyce and Stanley.

Stanley's parents were killed by an organization. If this badge belonged to the murderer, that could only mean Sean, who owned a badge identical to this one, belonged to the same organization as the murderer.

Thus, Shane reckoned as long as he continued investigating the background of this organization, it was very likely he would end up finding Sean as well.

Watching the intense expression on his face and seeing the sketch being crumpled up in his grip, Natalie pursed her lips for a moment before asking, "So, what you're saying is that Sean and the people who murdered Stanley's parents are members of the same organization?"

"That's what I think. Anyway, I'm taking this sketch. I'll be in my study," stated Shane darkly.

Natalie nodded, knowing he was heading off to his study to dig up information on the organization connected with the badge. "Sure. Go ahead."

Shane turned and left the room.

After he left, Natalie dialed Joyce's number and told her about the new findings.

Joyce was so happy that she called Stanley and relayed the news to him as soon as she hung up the call with Natalie.

Soon after that, Natalie's phone rang with a call from Stanley.

"Nat, are you sure Sean had been seen with that badge before?" The light reflected off his glasses, making his eyes hard to be seen.

Natalie nodded. "Yes, Shane said he'd seen him wearing it before, so it must be true. Besides, Shane's also checking out the organization behind the badge right now. What about you, Stanley? Have you found anything?"

Last time, Joyce had mentioned that he had taken the badge away to investigate it himself, but no news had come back about it yet.

Adjusting his glasses, Stanley answered, "Not yet. I asked a friend to help me out with it, but he hasn't given me any answers. I suppose he didn't find anything, though, since I'd given him the task quite some time ago."

"It's all right. Shane's on it now. I'll let you know once he comes up with anything." Natalie smiled.

The line went silent for two seconds before Stanley replied, "Thanks, Nat."

"Don't mention it. You could say we both share a common enemy now, so it's only natural that we help each other out." Natalie waved her hand dismissively.

Stanley's lips then twitched as if he was hesitating to speak. A moment later, he finally started to talk. "Nat, I think there's something I need to tell you."

"What is it?" Natalie became serious when she heard the sudden solemnness in his tone. "Jacqueline came to see me a while ago." The words that just came out of Stanley's mouth were shocking, to say the least.

Natalie's expression changed slightly. "What do you mean? She went to see you?"

"That's right."

"What for?" Natalie's fingers curled into fists instinctively.

Adjusting his glasses again, Stanley answered, "She wanted me to help her leave J City."

"And did you agree to her request?" Natalie raised her voice unwittingly.

Stanley shook his head. "No, but I think she's no longer in the city."

Natalie was utterly stunned. "How would you know that?"

"After I rejected helping her, I told her she might as well ask Sean for help. He was bound to do her a favor since they're allies. So, I think that's what she did. If she'd succeeded in finding him, then I'm sure she's fled the city."

Natalie's entire figure trembled with rage. "How could you hide such an important piece of information from me? You know full well about the grudge between Jacqueline and me!"

"I'm sorry, Nat." Stanley lowered his gaze apologetically, but his face showed absolutely no remorse.

Natalie couldn't see his expression anyway. Shutting her eyes, she went on, "What's the point of your apology now that the incident has passed for such a long time? And why are you telling me this now? You chose not to say anything when it happened."

"Because you just told me about the clue you'd just found, so—"

"So this is how you show your thanks?" said Natalie with a scoff.

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Stanley's gaze flickered. "Something like that."

"Forget it. That's not important. What I'm more interested to know is why Jacqueline came to you for help in the first place? As far as I can remember, you were only her attending physician at one point, and you two weren't particularly close with each other outside of that context." Natalie narrowed her eyes suspiciously.

Stanley laughed quietly in response. "Well, I don't know the reason either. Maybe she came to me because she had no one else to turn to."

"Is that so?" Natalie pursed her lips tight. It was hard to tell how much she believed in that statement.

After a brief silence, she added, "You also mentioned that Jacqueline and Sean were allies. What do you mean by that?"

"I found that out by chance as well. They got into contact which each other once before you and Mr. Shane stopped talking to each other. Jacqueline gave Stanley a video, which he forwarded to Mr. Shane. It was after that that you and Mr. Shane started giving each other the silent treatment," came Stanley's reply.

Natalie's pupils constricted. "A video? Could it be the one that—"

"Indeed, that's the one." Stanley nodded, acknowledging that he meant the video that was on Natalie's mind.

Natalie's hand shook as she gripped on her phone.

So it was Sean who sent that video.

However, what surprised her most was still Stanley.

Neither she nor Shane had known that Sean was the culprit behind it, yet Stanley did.

But how did he know all this?

"Are you still there, Nat?" Stanley asked.

Snapping out of her train of thoughts, she suppressed her suspicions as she mumbled into the phone, "Yeah, I'm still here, but I've got to go now. Talk to you another time, Stanley."

"All right." Stanley nodded with a smile.

After the call ended, Natalie put down her phone and pondered deeply about what she'd just learned.

She felt as if most of everything she knew was concealed by a thin veil, which obscured the essence of the truth within.

Every time she succeeded in peeling it away, she would only find layers and layers of those veils beneath the one she had just removed, making it impossible for her ever to grasp the truth.

This was especially true for Stanley's case.

She had always assumed he would not possibly be connected with Jacqueline and Sean in any way, as they held no grudges with each other.

Only now was she beginning to realize how naive she had been all this time.

A blood feud likely existed between Stanley and the organization Sean was involved in, and she bet there were more details about Stanley's relationship with Jacqueline that she had yet to find out.

There was no other reason Jacqueline would have sought his help.

She refused to believe Jacqueline had only done so because she had no one else to turn to.

Massaging her temples, Natalie let out a long and heavy sigh.

Just then, Shane entered the room and closed the door behind him. "What's with the sigh?"

"It's Stanley," Natalie replied.

A dark look instantly shrouded Shane's handsome face. "Stanley? Why are you suddenly bringing him up?"

"I was just on the phone with him." Natalie sat him down and told him the whole story.

When she was done, she stared at him in astonishment, asking, "Why don't you seem surprised at all?"

"What is there to be surprised about?" Shane raised his eyebrows questioningly.

Natalie furrowed her brows. "Aren't you shocked that it was Sean and Jacqueline who had conspired to send you that video?"

Shane chuckled. "I'd guessed that earlier on. Not only that, but I'd also suspected Jacqueline had long since left J City."

"Huh? You guessed that earlier on?" Natalie's mouth fell open in bewilderment before she punched his chest angrily. "Then why didn't you tell me so?"

"You were occupied with Harrison's matters. I didn't want to burden you further." Shane wrapped her into his embrace and planted a soft kiss on her forehead.

The burning rage in her heart instantly subsided. Sighing, she stated, "I can't believe there were things that happened between Jacqueline and Stanley that I don't know about."

"Don't worry. We'll get to the bottom of this," Shane reassured her, squeezing her hand.

"All right." She leaned her head against his chest. "What about the badge?"

Shane rested his chin on her head, rubbing it fondly, and reassured her, "I've asked Silas to look into it. I'm sure it'll bear results soon."

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Natalie felt slightly ticklish but didn't push him away. "All right, then."

She shut her eyes and yawned wearily.

Seeing that, Shane asked, "Feeling tired?"

"Yeah. I've been busy attending to Harrison's matters these few days and haven't been getting much rest." Natalie's voice sounded worn out.

Shane patted her back. "Go ahead and get some sleep, then. I'll be right here, keeping you company."

"Okay." A smile graced her lips. She soon fell asleep, her arms still wrapped around his waist.

Seeing that she was fast asleep, Shane scooped her into his arms and tucked her into bed.

The next day was Susan's execution day, as well as the day of Harrison's funeral.

The weather was rather gloomy, creating an unsettling and depressive atmosphere.

Clad in a long black dress with a white rose pinned to her chest, Natalie stood before the break room window with a glass of juice in her hand, watching the funeral guests with a calm gaze.

"Nat," came Jared's voice from behind her.

She spun around. "What's up?"

"Shane asked me to see what you're up to," Jared answered with a smile.

Like her, he was dressed in all black with a similar white rose pinned on his front pocket. Even though his lips were curved into a smile, his eyes were red and teary.

"Nothing. Just gazing at the crowd here. What about him?" she asked, sipping her fruit juice.

Jared massaged his aching neck and responded, "The kids are with him, and he's caught up in a discussion with a collaborator, so he asked me to come for you. It's about time, Nat. Harrison's—I mean, Dad's—ashes should be loaded by now. It's about time we head to the mausoleum."

Natalie glanced at her watch and saw that it was indeed time to leave. "Sure, let's go."

Jared nodded. "I'll let the others know."

With that, he went out.

A moment later, Shane came in with the children.

Natalie knew they had come for her and went to them with a smile.

"Have you been crying?" asked Shane in a low voice when he noticed her slightly reddened eyes.

Natalie shook her head. "No, I haven't cried, although I do feel quite sad."

The two children had not shed a tear either.

They were never close with their grandfather and thus did not feel so grieved that they wanted to cry.

The same went for Shane.

"Come on, let's get into the car." Shane pulled Natalie's hand.

She nodded, following him to the car.

About an hour later, they arrived at the mausoleum.

Jared led the procession, holding Harrison's ashes, while Natalie, Shane, and the children followed at the back.

The burial was over in no time, and the tombstone was erected.

After the guests offered up their flowers, they left one by one, leaving the place to Natalie and her family.

Natalie spoke not a word as she gazed at the brand new tombstone carved with Harrison's name.

Standing beside her, Jared remained wordless as well.

Shane and the two children were even quieter. The entire scene was shrouded in silence.

After a long while, just as the first raindrop began to fall from the sky, Natalie took a deep breath and murmured, "Rest in peace, Dad."

She had forgiven him.

The sound of her calling out "Dad" seemed to flip a switch in Jared, who instantly broke into tears, crying out, "Rest in peace, Dad!"

Pulling the children forward, Natalie stroked their hair gently and urged, "Go on, call Grandpa."

The children cast an uncertain look at each other and then nodded. Turning toward Harrison's tombstone, they called out in unison, "Grandpa!"

It was their first time addressing Harrison as their grandfather, although he was no longer around to hear it.

Yet, Shane had not said a word, and Natalie did not ask him to, either.

After all, Harrison had played Shane when he was alive as well. Although Natalie had decided to forgive him, she did not feel it was her place to ask Shane to do the same.

The fact that he had even attended the funeral was already a huge sign of respect to Harrison.

Thus, she would not pressure him to express forgiveness toward him.

Soon, the rain became heavier.

It didn't take long before they were all drenched.

Shane took off his coat and covered the children's heads with it. He turned to Natalie and uttered, "Let's go."

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Natalie was also worried the children would catch a cold if they stood in the rain any longer. She nodded in agreement. "Sure, let's go."

The three adults and two children left the mausoleum and returned to the car together.

"Let's go back to the villa," Shane ordered Silas as he took out a few towels, passing them around.

Silas immediately started the car and began driving.

On the way, Shane busied himself drying the children's hair with the towels, completely disregarding the fact that his hair was just as wet and dripping with rainwater.

Jared and Natalie were drying their own hair at their side.
Watching the scene, Jared chuckled and said, "Shane's a great dad indeed."

"Yes, he is." Natalie nodded while smiling.

Shane did not respond to those statements, but the corners of his lips lifted unwittingly, hinting at his happiness.

"All right," he said. Seeing that the children's hair was mostly dry now, he stopped fussing over them and was about to start drying his own when a white towel flew toward him and landed on his head.

Natalie laughed lightly. "You must be tired after drying their hair, so let me help you with yours."

With that, she laid both hands on the towel on his head and began rubbing his hair with it.

With a slight chuckle, Shane shut his eyes and let her get on with it.

Suddenly, the sound of a ringtone ruined the heart-warming scene in the car.

Hearing that it was her phone ringing, Natalie dropped the towel and picked up her phone. "It's from the police station."

Jared's and Shane's heads swiveled toward her at once.

"It must be about Susan," said Shane.

Jared nodded. "It must be. Today's the date of her execution, and the time set for it was at noon. It's ten past noon now."

Natalie pursed her lips, remaining silent. Then she picked up the call. "This is Natalie speaking."

"Hello, Ms. Smith. This is the police."

"Yes, I know that. How may I help you?"

The voice on the line answered, "It's about Susan's body. Would you like to claim it?"

To the police's understanding, Susan was not only Natalie's stepmother but was also the culprit behind Natalie's father's murder.

Considering the evil deeds Susan had carried out in her lifetime, they reckoned Natalie and her family might not want to claim her body.

However, seeing as Susan was legally still a member of the Smith family, they decided to call and ask for Natalie's view on it anyway.

If it were not for that reason, they would have sent her body straight to the hospital for organ donation.

"Please hold on for a moment." Natalie thought she should consult Shane and Jared on the matter. "The police is asking if we want to claim Susan's body."

Shane cocked an eyebrow. "What are your thoughts on it?"

Biting her lip, Natalie said, "I don't want to. What about you, Jared?"

"Of course, I don't want to either. But what happens if we don't claim it? What would the police do with the body?" asked Jared curiously.

Shane gave him the answer. "It'll be sent to the hospital, where her organs will be harvested for transplantation. Then what's left of her will be cremated, and her ashes will be kept in the funeral home. Of course, there's another option as well, which is to send the body to a medical school where it'll become a specimen for future doctors to study anatomy."

"That's right. Those are the two ways our government deals with unclaimed bodies," Natalie agreed while nodding.

Jared heaved a long sigh. "Then let's go with the first option. Send her body to a hospital. She did so many terrible deeds during her lifetime. Let this be the way she makes up for it. As for the ashes, Jasmine and Warren can have them later."

"Okay." A smile graced Natalie's lips.

That was indeed her preferred solution as well.

"I'll tell the police that, then." With that, she went back on the line and told the police their decision.

The police were not the least bit surprised to hear it.

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After all, Susan had killed Natalie's mother and poisoned her father. Of course, Natalie would not want to claim her body and give her a proper burial.

Besides, considering all the atrocious acts she had done during her time, donating her organs to save the lives of others was possibly the best thing she could ever do for society.

After hanging up, Natalie put her phone down. "From now on, the hatred between us and her will no longer exist."

"That's right." Jared nodded.

Natalie turned to him. "When are you leaving?"

Jared's face broke into a wee smile. "Tomorrow. My mentor said one of my works was selected and would be included in the exhibition. I'll have to go and have a look. It's the first time my work is displayed."

"We'll send you off tomorrow, then," Shane stated.

Jared was overjoyed. "Thanks, Shane."

Shane nodded.

Beside them, Natalie massaged her brow wearily. "It's about time I go back as well. The competition's still not over yet."

"When are we leaving, Mommy?" asked Connor.

She patted his head while saying, "There's no rush. Maybe we'll leave this weekend after the hearing of the bad guy who hurt Grandpa and Grandma is over."

"Okay," the two children answered in unison.

Shane's brows were furrowed deeply.

Natalie gazed at him. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong. I was just thinking that I hadn't visited Sam for a while. I'm going later and will be bringing Aunt Catherine along," he explained. Natalie lifted her chin. "So that she can get her divorce done?"

"Yeah."

"Do you think Sean would approve of it?" she asked, twirling her hair.

Shane let out a scoff. "Why wouldn't he? He never cared much about their marriage anyway."

"That's a fair point." Natalie shrugged and fell silent afterward.

Soon, they arrived at the Thompson villa.

Mrs. Wilson had received Silas' call to inform her about their arrival earlier.

She had also learned that they had all been drenched in the rain.

Thus, she prepared hot concoctions to prevent them from catching colds.

Even though none of them especially liked the taste of the drink, they obediently sipped it and emptied their cups so as not to disappoint her.

After that, Shane went to his room for a change of clothes and headed straight out.

Natalie knew he had gone off to the prison to meet Sam.

On the way, Silas received a phone call and reported, "Mr. Shane, Mrs. Thompson has left for the prison. She said she will meet you there."

In the backseat, Shane kept his eyes shut and merely mumbled something incoherent in acknowledgment.

Seeing that, Silas said no more and continued driving.

They arrived about an hour later.

Catherine stood at the prison's entrance, clad in a black down coat, her face covered by a mask. There were two bodyguards with her.

She went to Shane the moment she spotted him. "Shane."

Shane's gaze fell on the folder in her hand.

Noticing that, Catherine smiled awkwardly. "It's the divorce papers."

"I know that. Let's go in," stated Shane mildly as he averted his gaze and strode into the entrance.

Drawing in a deep breath, Catherine followed him.

Because Sam was paralyzed on one side of his body, he was unable to stand and came into the room on a wheelchair, which was pushed by a correctional officer.

In fact, considering the state he was in, he did not strictly need to be locked up in prison.

However, Shane was worried that there would be complications if he were given a non-custodial sentence.

Thus, he used his power and made sure Sam would remain imprisoned.

That was why, despite being a cripple, Sam still had to spend his days behind bars.

"I-It's you..." Sam picked up the phone with the side of his hand that was mobile and slurred out those words in a state of agitation.

Sam's paralysis was very different from Harrison's.

Toward the end of his life, Harrison was a quadriplegic. Despite being paralyzed from the neck down, he could still speak and spoke clearly.

However, Sam was paralyzed on one side of his body. While he could normally move one side of his mouth, he could not move the

other no matter how hard he tried. Thus, he struggled to pronounce each syllable, and even so, his words still sounded barely intelligible and even quite funny.

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However, neither Shane nor Catherine laughed at him.

As Shane glared at him icily, Catherine addressed him with an apologetic look on her face. "I'm here to see you, Sam."

Sam scoffed, saying with difficulty, "I've been in here for ages, yet you've never come. Don't you feel like a hypocrite to appear in this place now?"

He remembered vividly how Catherine had sold him out when he was caught, saying that he was solely responsible for the murder and that it had nothing to do with her.

Indeed, none of it had anything to do with her, but she was his wife. His heart chilled at the thought of how she had abandoned him in the moment of crisis, letting him face it alone.

"I'm the hypocrite?" Catherine had initially felt sorry for not visiting him. However, the moment she heard him saying that, the guilt in her heart instantly vanished, replaced only by rage.

"Will you leave us for a moment, Shane? I need to give this old man here a piece of my mind," Catherine asked Shane while she continued to glare at Sam furiously.

Shane raised his brows. "Sure. I'll be back in ten."

"All right." Catherine nodded.

Shane turned and left.

Now, only Catherine and Sam were left in the visiting room.

Catherine placed the folder on the counter and said, "You're right that I haven't visited you once ever since you'd gotten in here, but did you really think I had a choice? I was under house arrest by Shane the whole time. He even had someone watching me around the clock every day. As long as I acted slightly out of the ordinary, he'd suspect I was up plotting something. Do you even know how much I had to suffer throughout this time? And all this was because of you!"

"I-I had no idea. You didn't mention anything about it just now either." A guilty look flashed across Sam's eyes. Funnily, rather than admitting his own mistake in not asking her, he still insisted on blaming her for not bringing it up earlier.

Knowing his nature, Catherine did not remain angry at him for long, even though the entire matter did seem rather ironic to her. "Forget it. I didn't come to talk about these."

"Then what are you doing here?" Sam frowned.

Catherine scrutinized him. "I heard your final trial is coming soon, and you're likely to receive a death sentence. That's why I came to see you."

Hearing "death sentence" being uttered, Sam shuddered unwittingly as a burst of anger shot through his body. Even his eyes turned red as he stuttered, "I-It's Shane's fault! I-I'm his uncle! How dare that s-son of a b*tch do this to me!"

"That's enough. As his uncle, you killed his parents and fed him drugs that almost took away his ability to father a child. You can only blame yourself for the way he treats you," stated Catherine drily, rolling her eyes.

Sam stared at her in disbelief. "Y-You're speaking up for him?"

"I'm speaking up for nobody and am merely stating the facts from the point of view of an outsider," said Catherine nonchalantly. Sam scoffed. "Fine, I don't want to argue with you about this. Now, contact Sean quickly and have him come and save me. He has some powerful people backing him up, people who can easily turn a death sentence into a life sentence. You—"

"Bullsh*t! Sean's never cared about us. We may be his parents, but he would never come to rescue you. Surely he knew it when the both of us were either caught or imprisoned, but when had he ever shown his face? Never! It goes to show he really couldn't care whether we live or die." Catherine's tone was mild, but a plaintive expression lingered in her eyes.

At that, Sam's body shook even more violently. "How could he? I'm his father!"

"So what if you're his father? Have you ever loved or protected him before? I don't think so, and neither had I. Thus, how could you expect him to treat us as his parents? His heart is colder than what we can imagine, and it is us who had made him this way. At the bottom of it all, we're the ones who owe him, as we had never fulfilled our responsibilities as his parents. We really can't blame him for his cold-heartedness." Catherine ended her speech with a sigh.

In fact, she did blame Sean for completely ignoring them both, but no matter how much she felt that way, she would never shamelessly ask for his help.

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Besides, she did not feel she was worthy of doing that, nor did she wish to do so in any way.

To Catherine, since Sean did not want to acknowledge them as his parents, then he could suit himself. After all, she would soon be leaving the Thompson family, and as soon as she did, she would no longer be connected with any of them or her son.

She planned never to contact Sean or interrupt his life anymore after that. It would perhaps be the kindest thing she could do for him as his mother.

However, Sam did not think that way, nor was he half as noble as Catherine.

Slapping his thighs in agitation, he glared at her till his eyes almost popped out of their sockets. "Even if we weren't the best parents, we still gave him his life! That alone is good enough reason for him to be filial toward us and save our lives!"

"Well, dream on, then." Catherine rolled her eyes again and opened the folder. She slid the divorce papers and a pen into the transfer slot under the glass window. "That's it. I don't want to talk about nonsense anymore. My ten minutes are almost up anyway. Go on, sign it."

"What's this?" Sam did not reach out to take the document and thus did not know its contents.

Catherine yawned as if she was bored. "The divorce papers."

Sam's face darkened. "Y-You want to get a d-divorce?"

"Yes. Since you're almost dying and Sean's never coming back, it's time our family disbanded. Please sign it quickly so that I can leave."

"I'm locked up in here, and the only thing you can think about is getting a divorce? H-Have you ever thought of me as your husband?!" Sam pointed a trembling finger at her accusatorily.

Catherine sneered at him, "My husband? I'm sorry, but no, I've never thought of you as one. You're not worthy of the title. Only a month after we got married, you started an affair with another woman, and you hit me when I went to look for you at her house. After that, you even brought your mistress home when I was pregnant. Even after Sean was born, you continued living outside with other women. Everything you did was a stab to my heart!"

Hearing that, Sam found no words to defend himself and averted his gaze guiltily. Catherine rubbed her eyes as she went on, "You wounded my heart again and again, yet you still expect me to regard you as my husband? Let me tell you this, Sam. I stopped thinking of you as my husband a long time ago, and my love for you has died since then. If not, I wouldn't have had other men outside. You would know how exciting that feels, wouldn't you?"

"Y-You shameless b*tch!" Sam's chest heaved violently.

Catherine burst into laughter. "I'm shameless? You and I both had other lovers outside. If anything, we're both shameless! Come to think of it... I had only acted that way because of the way you treated me, so you're in no position to judge me at all. That's it. Now, just sign it quickly, and I'll leave."

"Over my dead body. I'm never going to sign this." Sam glared at her menacingly, obviously intending to make her suffer.

Seeing his reaction, Catherine boiled with rage as well. She was just about to say something when footsteps sounded behind her, accompanied by Shane's impatient voice. "Are you done talking yet?"

"He won't sign it." Catherine turned her head around to look at Shane while pointing the finger at Sam. "You promised me before that you'd get him to agree to the divorce, Shane."

Shane nodded, "I will."

With that said, he strode forward.

Seeing that, Sam felt his chest tightening. "W-What are you trying to do?"

Shane was not using the phone and couldn't hear Sam's words, but he could guess what the latter said from the shape of his lips.

However, he did not respond but simply nodded at the correctional officer who was standing behind Sam.

The correctional officer came out, and Shane exchanged a few words with him.

"All right, Mr. Shane," said the guard in agreement.

He went back to Sam's side. Grabbing his hand, the guard took out his knife and slashed it on the latter's thumb.

Sam immediately howled in pain. "W-What are you doing? I-I will file a complaint against you! You're a prison guard! How dare you hurt me!"

"Ever since your first trial, you've been deprived of your political rights for life, so you have absolutely no rights to do that," the prison guard responded coolly.

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On the other side of the glass window, Catherine was shocked to the core by what she had just witnessed. "S-Shane, what—"

"You'll know soon enough," Shane answered, his face devoid of expression.

Seeing that, Catherine merely nodded and spoke no more, fixing her gaze on the scene inside.

The prison guard flipped open the divorce papers and pushed Sam's bleeding thumb toward the signature section.

Catherine finally understood what was going on, her fists clenching tightly.

Sam caught on to the prison guard's intentions as well and roared at him hysterically, "Let me go! You can't force me to do this!"

The prison guard remained indifferent to Sam's retaliation and merely pressed the latter's thumb onto the signature section.

With that, Sam stopped struggling and screaming.

He knew the matter had already concluded, and no amount of struggling or screaming would change a thing anymore.

Thus, he merely sat there, still and lifeless, like a body that had lost its soul.

The prison guard closed the divorce papers and dropped them back into the transfer slot.

Catherine instantly snatched it up and opened it. The moment she saw the fresh thumbprint on the signature line, tears of joy and relief sprang into her eyes as she exclaimed, "Finally! Finally, I'm free!"

With this divorce, she could gain half of Sam's assets. Added with her dowry and other personal assets like the land, luxury cars, and jewelry that she owned, her total assets would easily amount to hundreds of millions.

She could live the rest of her life any way she wanted.

"Now that you've gotten his signature, go on and get the divorce certificate at the City Hall. I'll send Silas to go with you. Once that's done, you have three days to leave the Thompson residence," stated Shane coolly, gazing at Catherine, who was overcome with joy.

She nodded repeatedly. "Don't worry. I promise I'll leave within three days."

"Go on." Shane gave her a dismissive wave.

After she hurried off, he turned toward Sam, who had just snapped back out of his daze.

He glared at Shane with a vicious look in his eyes, saying seethingly, "Are you happy now that you've ruined my entire family and broke us apart?"

"Of course, I am," Shane answered in an indifferent tone, tucking his hands into his pockets calmly.

Sam's body couldn't stop shaking. "I-If only I had known y-you would turn out to become such a b*stard, I would have killed you when you were little! So what if my father had proof that I murdered Seth and his wife? I should still have finished you off back then, or I wouldn't have landed in this predicament!"

"There's no such thing as 'if only," came Shane's brief reply.

Sam thumped his chest in regret. "Indeed, I couldn't have known that. That's why I lost..."

"Don't worry. Someone will be here soon to keep you company. I've already identified the other culprit," Shane said with narrowed eyes.

"Who is it?" Sam glared at him intently.

"Jacqueline."

"Jacqueline?" A blank look came over Sam's face as though he couldn't remember who that was.

Shane pursed his lips, adding, "Jacqueline from the Graham family. My mother's goddaughter."

"Oh, it's her!" The memory finally struck Sam, and his eyes widened in disbelief. "But that's impossible! Eighteen years ago, she was only a little girl—"

"The truth of the matter is that she was indeed the culprit. It was she who had led my parents to that street, giving your men the opportunity to attack them. So the question I have for you now is, how did she inform you about my parents' arrival on that street?"

Shane gazed at Sam unwaveringly, waiting for an answer, but Sam said not a word.

However, Shane was not the least bit perturbed. He simply smirked, stating, "It's fine if you refuse to explain anything now, for I'll find out anyway as soon as I catch Jacqueline."

With that said, he swiveled on his heels, readying himself to leave.

At that moment, Sam's voice rang out suddenly. "With a letter."

"What letter?" Shane spun on his heels.

Sam met his gaze. "That morning, I had just arrived at the office when a child came to me and handed me an envelope. He said someone had shown him my photo and asked him to deliver the envelope to me."

"What was in the letter?" Shane's hands balled into fists in his pockets.

"Since I had no idea who had sent the child, I assumed it was a practical joke and threw the envelope away without looking. However, another child came to me at noon that day and gave me another envelope. By then, I'd sensed that it wasn't a joke, so I ripped it open and got the fright of my life when I read the contents of the letter. Whoever sent it said they knew about my plans to murder Seth and obtain Thompson Group."