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Panicked at the thoughts, Jasmine stepped forward with her clenched fists and protested, "Shane, you can't do this to me. Five years ago, you said you would give me everything I wanted, but now..."

The man interrupted her, leaning back against his chair. "Yes, I said that because you saved my life. But I've done more than enough to repay you. Recently, everything you do crosses the limits, and I can't tolerate you any longer. Do you understand?"

"I..." Jasmine's lips moved, but her voice was stuck in her throat.

Standing in front of the door, Natalie furrowed her beautiful brows in suspicion.

This isn't the first time I hear Shane say that Jasmine saved him five years ago. What exactly happened between them?

While she was deep in thought, Shane's voice broke her out of her trance. "That's enough. I hope you'll behave yourself from now on. You may leave."

Jasmine's eyes dropped, covering up all the indignation in her gaze. She then walked toward the door reluctantly.

Walking through the door, out of the corner of her eye, she saw Natalie standing outside the office with a faraway look. Taken aback, she yelled angrily, "What the hell are you doing here?"

Snapped out of her reverie, Natalie gave the woman a half-smile. "It's been a while, Ms. Jasmine."

The woman snorted scornfully. "I've already been fired, yet you address me this way. Are you mocking me?"

Catherine is so useless. That dumb woman couldn't kick Natalie out, even when she used her identity as Shane's Aunt.

"No, I didn't mean that. It's just that I'm used to calling you this way. You're overthinking, Ms. Jasmine." Natalie shrugged nonchalantly.

"Do you think I'll believe your nonsense?" Jasmine sniggered with her lips pursed. In the next second, she narrowed her eyes at Natalie. "How long have you been standing here?"

"Oh, I've been here for quite a while," she answered honestly.

A glint of nervousness flashed across Jasmine's eyes. "Did you hear what I said to Shane just now?"

Natalie nodded with a smile. "Of course."

The woman's face contorted as she scrutinized Natalie balefully. Her voice was laced with threat. "Let me warn you. Don't you ever say a word about what you heard just now."

I can't afford to let anyone else know that Shane no longer protects me. Otherwise, I'll have to face a whole lot of trouble, and I won't be able to take it!

"What if I don't do as you said?" Natalie asked fearlessly, ruffling her hair.

Jasmine flashed a menacing smile. "Then I'll ask Dad to take that damn brother of yours back!"

"Don't you dare!" Natalie's expression turned grim at once.

Undeniably, Jasmine had successfully threatened her.

With her arms folded, the woman warned her. "I'll do that if you dare say a word about it. If Dad really wants your brother back, you and your Mom won't stand a chance against him."

With a smirk on her face, Jasmine cast a sideways glance at Natalie. She then knocked the latter out of the way using her shoulder as she strutted toward the elevator.

Pursing her red lips, Natalie seethed with fury and shot daggers at Jasmine's departing back.

After a short moment, she took a deep breath to calm herself down. Patting her own cheeks, she sorted out her emotions before knocking on the door of Shane's office. "Mr. Shane."

"Come in." Shane's impassive voice came from inside.

Pushing the door open, Natalie walked in. "Mr. Shane, how can I help you?"

"Take a seat." Instead of answering her question, Shane tilted his chin back to point at the chair opposite him.

Walking toward his desk, she thanked him, pulled the chair out, and sat on it.

With his fingers interlaced, the man went straight to the point. "Regarding the designs of the fall collection we talked about during the last meeting, how is it going?"

"It's almost done," Natalie replied.

"Are those designs saved in the cloud storage?" he asked.

"Yes." She nodded at him.

Turning his laptop around, Shane pushed it forward to her.

Natalie typed on the keyboard briefly. Then she handed the laptop back to him. "Here you go, Mr. Shane."

The man hummed in reply. He scrolled down and went through the designs.

After staring at the screen for a few minutes, he seemed to have thought of something and asked Silas to come in. "Bring a cup of coffee and a piece of black forest cake for Ms. Smith."

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"Mr. Shane..." Natalie was about to say no, but Silas beat her to it. "Sure, I'll prepare it now."

With that said, he shot her a meaningful glance before turning around and walking toward the door.

I have been wondering why Mr. Shane kept asking me to buy cakes these days. After I bought it, he put it in the fridge instead of eating it, and he would throw it away when he got off from work. On the next day, he would ask me to buy a cake again. Now I see why he did that.

Soon, Silas came back into the office with a tray. He put a cup of coffee and a piece of cake in front of Natalie.

Bashfully, she glanced at the man sitting across the table. "Mr. Shane, isn't this inappropriate?"

"Why? Don't you like it?" Shane looked up from behind the laptop screen.

She hurriedly waved her hands. "No, no. I just feel it's inappropriate to eat in your office..."

"It's alright. It'll take time for me to finish reading the proposal. You may eat the cake while waiting."

Afterward, he turned his head back to the screen and didn't talk to her anymore.

Since he had put it this way, it would be rude if she turned him down. Picking up the exquisite fork, she took a small piece of the cake and put it in her mouth. The delicious and unique taste on her tongue made her eyes curled in happiness.

"Does it taste good?" Shane asked suddenly. His hand on the mouse froze.

"It's so delicious," she answered with a warm smile, licking the whipped cream on the fork.

Staring at her alluring red lips, his gaze darkened. His voice sounded deep and slightly croaky. "That's good. You can bring the rest of the cake home."

"But..."

"So the kids can have it too." Shane interrupted her, as he already knew what she was about to say.

Natalie's lips moved, and it curled up in a smile. "Thank you, Mr. Shane."

Shane hummed in acknowledgment. He turned to look at Silas, who then adjusted his glasses and said, "I got it. I'll pack the cake now."

See, I got it right. The cake is for Ms. Smith.

Half an hour later, Natalie walked out of Shane's office with a cake box and headed to the design department.

While she was still on her way, she received a call from Stanley. "Nat, are you free tonight?"

"Yeah, I am. Why?" she asked in return.

Standing in front of a window, Stanley said gently, "My neurology paper has been published in an international journal."

"Really?" Natalie was pleasantly surprised.

He nodded faintly. "Yes."

"Congratulations, Stanley!" She quickly congratulated the man and was genuinely happy for him.

He chuckled. "Thank you. How about having dinner together tonight as a celebration?"

"Just the two of us?" she asked.

The man's head twitched, and light reflected from his glasses. "Of course not. I asked Joyce to join us too."

"Okay, send me the address. I'll come after work," Natalie agreed straight away after knowing that Joyce would be there as well.

After hanging up the phone, Stanley sent her a text.

Staring at the address in the text, Natalie's brows knitted together. "Scarlet Lounge... If I'm not mistaken, it's a bar. I guess I can't bring the kids then."

Mumbling to herself, she kept her phone, pushed open the door of the design department, and walked in.

Right after her figure disappeared behind the door, Shane stepped out of the corner where he had hidden himself just now. Holding a bag in his hand, he stared in the direction of the design department with a solemn gaze, sunk in thought. His lips pressed into a hard line.

After a short while, without hesitation, he turned around and walked away, back to the top floor.

Seeing that his boss came back so soon, Silas was a little surprised. His eyes fell on the bag in Shane's hand. "Mr. Shane, didn't you just go out to send some clothes to Ms. Smith? Why are the clothes still with you?"

Without a word, the man put the bag down. A few seconds later, he asked, "Did Jackson ask me out for a drink at Scarlet Lounge?"

"Yeah." Silas nodded.

Shane tugged at his tie and loosened it. "Tell him, I'll be there on time."

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Silas was puzzled by his words. "But didn't you say this morning that you won't be going?"

"Hmm?" Shane turned to glare at his assistant with his brows snapped together.

Meeting his boss' frigid gaze, he touched the tip of his nose and changed the topic right away. "Okay, I'll let Dr. Baker know."

While speaking, he promptly took his phone out.

Only then Shane averted his gaze.

At night, Natalie picked the two kids up from the kindergarten and went home. After tucking them in, she hailed a cab to Scarlet Lounge.

When she arrived, Stanley was already sitting at a table.

Natalie walked over to him. "Stanley, sorry that I'm late. There was quite a bit of traffic on my way here," she said apologetically.

Helping the woman put her handbag aside, Stanley smiled at her. "It's okay. I've just arrived too. Take a seat."

"Mmm..." Natalie responded, straightening the hem of her skirt before sitting down. Realizing that there were only the two of them, she looked at him and asked, "Is Joyce not here yet?"

The corner of Stanley's lips turned down slightly, and his smile faded a little. Looking down, he answered, "She just texted me, saying that she has something to do, so she can't make it tonight."

"That's too bad." Natalie felt disappointed, but she didn't think too much.

With a smile, Stanley passed her a menu. "Let's order. Take a look and see if there's anything you'd like to eat."

"Okay, thank you." She took the menu from him and flipped it open.

After picking three dishes, she handed the menu back to him.

Glancing through the menu, the man didn't order any food but a bottle of Louis XIII.

Seeing that, Natalie became worried. "Stanley, I don't think we should drink. I heard that alcohol affects the stability of our hands. You're a doctor and often need to perform surgeries. What if..."

"Never mind. I'm very happy today, so it's fine to have a couple of drinks." He gave her a reassuring smile.

Natalie had no choice but to let him be.

Soon after, the dishes and the wine were served.

Opening the bottle, Stanley poured two glasses of wine and gently pushed one of them toward Natalie.

She picked the wine glass up and clinked it against his. Tilting her head back, she downed the entire glass of wine in one gulp.

Louis XIII was one of the strongest among all the well-known wines, and its flavor was overwhelming. After only one glass, Natalie's face turned beet red, and her eyes became dewy.

Stanley saw it, and the corner of his lips twitched up inconspicuously behind his wine glass.

Oblivious to his reaction, Natalie took a sip of water to tone down the alcoholic taste in her mouth. Afterward, she took a small, delicate gift box out of her bag. "Stanley, this is a gift for your papers."

Never did he expect that Natalie had prepared a gift for him. He couldn't help but freeze in astonishment.

In the next second, the man regained his composure and put on his usual gentle smile as he unwrapped the gift.

In the box was an expensive watch. Though it wasn't of a high-end brand, it still cost a bomb.

Immediately, he took his own watch off and put on the new watch Natalie gave him. Swaying his wrist, he said to her, "Thanks, Nat. I really like it."

"I'm glad that you like it." Natalie nodded joyfully.

Stanley then poured her another glass of wine.

Meanwhile, in a private room on the second floor of the restaurant, a tall and short figures were looking down at them in front of a window.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk..." the short man suddenly said to the taller one beside him. "Shane, Stanley seems to have an ulterior motive."

With his lips pressed together, Shane did not reply, but it didn't bother the short man.

Rubbing his chin with his thumb and index finger, Jackson added, "Look, he ordered a bottle of Louis XIII. He hasn't finished drinking the one glass himself, but he never stops refilling Natalie's glass. I bet he wants to get her drunk so he can do whatever he wants with her."

Hearing his friend's words, Shane's hands, which were on the windowsill, clenched tightly all of a sudden. The atmosphere around him turned chilly.

Looking at the man beside him, Jackson thought of how unusually attentive he was to Natalie. And his heart grew heavy. "Shane, are you really..."

Before he could finish his sentence, Shane turned around abruptly and marched toward the door of the private room.

Jackson gaped at him in shock. "Shane, where are you going?"

The man ignored him, opened the door, and darted out of the room.

Helplessly, Jackson rubbed his chubby face. He grumbled to himself while running after his friend.

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On the ground floor, Natalie was already drunk. Her face flushed bright red, and her eyes glazed over and were unfocused. Sitting there blankly, she let out a few hiccups.

Stanley put his fork down and waved at her. With his five fingers spread in front of her eyes, he asked, "Nat, how many fingers do you see?"

Blinking her glassy eyes while staring at his hand, she answered hesitantly, "Two?"

His eyes glinted with an inscrutable emotion. "That's wrong. There are five fingers. Nat, you're drunk."

"I... I'm not drunk!" Natalie protested petulantly, pouting her red lips.

Stanley removed his glasses and put it in his shirt pocket. Letting out a few chuckles, he coaxed her in a gentle tone, as if she was a child. "Yes, yes. You're not drunk, but I am. Let's go home, alright?"

"Okay." Natalie hiccupped, nodding her head obediently.

The man stood up and asked a waiter to bring the bill.

After paying, he carried her handbag on one shoulder and held her up by her waist.

The man caught a whiff of her refreshing scent mixed with the rich aroma of Louis XIII. Captivated, he leaned closer and drew in a deep breath. His gaze was full of lust and possessiveness.

Just then, an icy voice sounded unexpectedly. "Stop right here."

Stanley stopped in his tracks and lifted his eyes in the direction of the voice. The moment he saw Shane and Jackson walking over, one after another, his heart sank.

Why are they here?

"I'll take it from here. Give her to me." Standing about an arms-length away from Stanley, Shane glanced at the unconscious woman in the man's arms. His tone was domineering.

"Why should I do that?" Stanley refused, holding Natalie even tighter.

Shane squinted his eyes at him with a threatening look. "You're asking me why? I don't mind explaining why you get her drunk on purpose."

A smile broke across Stanley's face, but it didn't quite reach his eyes. "Mr. Shane, I've no idea what you're talking about. Excuse me, Nat and I are going home."

"Do you think I'll let you go? I said, give her to me!" Shane stood in the way, enunciating his every word.

The smile on Stanley's face slowly disappeared. Staring squarely at the man facing him, he said, "What if I say no?"

That's right, I got her drunk on purpose. When I made the rounds in the hospital during the day, I overheard Sean and his mother's conversation, saying that Nat and Shane are getting closer to one another. That's why I can't take it anymore. I've been by her side for five long years, yet I'm no match for a man who has only been with her for two months. That's not fair! So I asked her out for a dinner in the name of celebration, so I can have her. Once she

becomes mine, she'll surely get together with me. There's no way I'm going to let anyone ruin my plan.

Lost in his thoughts, the malice in Stanley's gaze grew more intense, and his expression was zealous and wild.

Jackson, who was watching them from the sidelines, was startled by his reaction.

Stanley is usually gentle and well-mannered. Many patients liked him too. I really didn't expect to see this side of him. I heard that people who have extreme personalities are usually psychotic. Could it be that Stanley is out of his mind?

Jackson eyed the man suspiciously.

Stanley noticed his gaze and shot him a deadly glance.

A chill ran down Jackson's spine, and he couldn't help but quiver, as if he were being targeted by a deadly viper.

"You have no right to say no." Shane couldn't care less about Stanley. He reached out and grabbed Natalie's wrist, trying to yank her away from the man.

Though he acted quickly, Stanley wasn't slow to react. Just when he started dragging the woman to his side, Stanley swiftly took hold of the other arm of hers.

Being pulled in two ways like a tug of war, Natalie felt her head spin, and she groaned in agony.

Jackson couldn't stand it anymore. He took a step forward and put his hand on Stanley's, which was clutching Natalie's arm. Prying the man's fingers open one after another, he said with a smirk, "Dr. Quinn, I heard that your paper was published. Can I have a word with you?"

While speaking, he winked at Shane, hinting at the man to take Natalie away.

Seeing through Jackson's trick, Stanley glowered at him and shouted, "Scram!"

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Looking down at his own short figure, Jackson gritted his teeth and blocked Stanley's way, despite knowing that he could never fight against that man. "No way!"

After glancing intently at Jackson's undaunted expression, Shane picked the woman up in his arms and walked away under another man's murderous gaze.

In the carpark, Silas saw from afar that Shane was carrying someone while walking over to the car.

As the man came nearer, he stared with mouth agape when he saw Natalie in his boss' arms. "Mr. Shane, how did you bump into Ms. Smith?"

Without explaining, Shane put the woman in the car and commanded directly, "Let's go."

"Okay," Silas replied and started the car.

Suddenly, from the rearview mirror, he saw two men sprinting over to their car. Turning his head, he asked, "Mr. Shane, it's Dr. Baker and Dr. Quinn. Should we wait for them?"

Apparently, Jackson couldn't stop Stanley from coming after them. Glancing out the window, Shane pursed his thin lips. "No, let's go now."

Silas gave him a nod. He then hit the gas and drove out of the carpark.

On their way home, the alcohol kicked in, and the woman who was sitting still in silence suddenly broke into a fit of giggles.

Silas looked at the backseat via the mirror, saying in surprise, "Mr. Shane, it looks like Ms. Smith is going to do something crazy."

Shane glanced down at the woman beside him, and his brows drew together at the sight of her silly grin. "Drive faster."

"Sure," Silas replied.

The car accelerated, and the impact caused Natalie to fall on the seat.

Shane quickly put his phone down and held her up.

However, the woman clung to his arm and leaned closer to him.

Shane's body went stiff at once. "What are you doing?"

Fluttering her lashes, Natalie looked confused. "I'm thirsty. I want water..."

"Silas." Shane knocked on the back of the driver's seat.

Silas shrugged helplessly. "Mr. Shane, this is a new car. I've yet to prepare any water."

Hearing that, Shane fell silent for a few seconds. "We'll drink water when we reach home."

"No, I want it now!" Natalie threw a fit out of the blue. With a sulky face, she slapped the leather seat with both her hands.

This was the first time Shane saw her behaving this way. He raised his brows in astonishment. "I said there's no water here."

"You're lying! I know you have it. You even have a pudding," Natalie whimpered while pointing at him. She seemed to be on the verge of crying.

"Pudding?" Shane furrowed his brows. "Where is it?"

"It's right here." Natalie knelt on the car seat while Shane stared at her in bafflement. In a split second, she reached out to cup his face between her hands and bit his lips.

Shane was stupefied.

In the driver's seat, Silas' hand almost slipped from the steering wheel. He was utterly dumbstruck.

What did I just see? Did she force a kiss on Mr. Shane?

"Oh? Why can't I bite it off?" Unaware of her own action, she looked displeased that she couldn't have the pudding.

I won't stop unless I get this pudding in my mouth. She then sank her teeth harder onto his lips.

Shane groaned in pain. He knew that she bit through his lips when a metallic taste of blood seeped into his mouth.

Even so, he didn't push her away. Instead, he gazed down at her with a darkened gaze.

After eyeing the woman for a minute, he suddenly lifted his hand to hold the back of her head, giving her a deep kiss.

Meanwhile, Silas had been peeking at the two. When he saw Shane took control of the situation, he shuddered and dared not watch them anymore, winding up the partition screen right away.

In the back seat, the man's passionate kiss made Natalie's body go limp, and she lay languidly in his arm.

If he hadn't been holding her, she would've slid off the seat.

"Mmm..." Natalie moaned, wrapping her arms around his neck.

Her gesture was like an encouragement to Shane. Instantly, his self-control went out of the window, and he kissed her even harder.

Right at that moment, Natalie appeared uncomfortable and let out a retching sound.