

Shane took out his phone, walked to the side, and made a call.

He said something to the other party on the call and hung up within two minutes.

Natalie stared at him with reddened eyes. "How was it?"

He shook his head gently. "The police said that some officers will be coming over immediately to fill us in on the details."

"Okay," replied Natalie, her hands clasped together tightly.

Soon, the police officers arrived.

"Are you Mr. Shane and Ms. Smith?" he asked, looking at both of them.

When Natalie heard his voice, she was surprised. "Are you the person who called me earlier and informed me about my Mom?"

"Yes." The inspector nodded.

Natalie brushed past Shane and grabbed his sleeve. "Sir, please tell me how my Mom got into the accident."

"The lady from the Smith family claimed that your Mom slipped and fell down the stairs," replied the inspector.

"How is that possible?" Natalie's fingers dug into her palms. She refused to believe in this explanation.

Shane took a step forward and hugged her shoulders. Looking at the inspector, he asked,

"How did you know that my mother-in-law fell down the stairs?"

"The head of the Smith family called the police," said the inspector.

"Harrison?" Natalie bit her lips. "Where are Harrison and Susan right now?"

"They're in the police station now. Although they claimed that your mother fell on her own, we have no proof to verify that they're speaking the truth. Hence, we took them back to the police station for an investigation," explained the inspector.

Natalie clenched her fists tightly. "No matter what, I will never believe that my Mom fell on her own."

Although people could lose their footing, it was simply too unlikely for someone to fall down the stairs because of that.

Furthermore, her mother was in the Smith Residence. Hence, she was more inclined toward the possibility that someone pushed her mother down.

Shane could tell what Natalie was thinking about. Squeezing her shoulders gently, he assured, "Don't worry. No matter what the truth is, I'll definitely find out."

The inspector chimed in, "Yes, Ms. Smith. The police will do our best to investigate this case."

Natalie took a deep breath, suppressing the turmoil of emotions rushing through her. She forced a smile out and replied, "Okay."

Immediately after she spoke, the light outside the emergency room turned off.

Natalie's eyes brightened as she spun around and rushed toward the entrance of the emergency room.

Shane was not in a hurry to go over. Instead, he looked at the inspector and said, "Please keep Harrison and his wife in the station for now. Don't let them leave. After my mother-in-law regains consciousness, we can continue with the investigation."

"Don't worry, Mr. Shane. We know what to do." The inspector nodded.

Shane mumbled a curt response before walking over toward Natalie.

When he reached her side, the doors to the emergency room opened, and out walked a doctor wearing a blue surgical gown.

Natalie rushed forward to meet him. "Doctor, how's my Mom? Is she alright?"

Glancing at her, the doctor took off his mask and sighed. "I'm sorry, ma'am, but we've tried our best."

Natalie's expression changed drastically.

Shane's eyes widened as he asked solemnly, "What do you mean by you've tried your best?" The doctor had witnessed numerous life and death situations before. Hence, when he heard Shane's question, he did not have much of a reaction. Sighing in pity, he explained, "The injuries the lady suffered from the fall are too severe. Apart from a broken spine, she has suffered a serious blow to her head. When she arrived at the hospital, she was already on the brink of death. I've already tried my best to save her, but I'm sorry that I didn't manage to do so. She has already passed away. Please accept my sincerest condolences!" With that, the doctor brushed past them and left.

Natalie's mind was completely blank. As if the blood had stopped flowing through her veins, her feet and hands turned icy-cold. A long while passed before she finally found her voice. Her lips trembling, she asked, "Shane, what did that doctor say about my Mom?" She raised her head and stared at him lifelessly. There was only darkness in her gaze.

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When Shane saw her reaction, his heart ached. He said, "S-She... passed away!"

Natalie's eyes widened before they rolled to the back of her head. Unable to bear this devastating blow, she toppled backward.

Noticing that, Shane's expression changed drastically. After calling out Natalie's name anxiously, he reached out his arms, grabbed her, and summoned the doctor over.

After a long while, Natalie was jolted awake by a nightmare.

Sitting up on the bed, she panted heavily as beads of sweat formed on her forehead. There was still a lingering trace of shock in her expression.

Shane pushed the door open and entered. When he saw that she was awake, he strode over briskly. "You're awake?"

"Shane?" Natalie turned her head around and glanced at him. Then, she grabbed his arm and exclaimed, "Shane, I just had a nightmare that my Mom passed away..."

"It's not a nightmare..." interrupted Shane, staring straight into her eyes.

Natalie's expression froze on her face. A long time passed before she spoke, her lips deathly pale. "Shane, do you know what you're saying?"

Shane hugged her head and pressed it into his embrace. "I do, but you know too, don't you?" Natalie's body froze.

Stroking her hair, Shane continued, "Nat, stop lying to yourself. It's not a nightmare. Your Mom's really gone."

His honest words immediately shattered Natalie's delusion that everything was a mere nightmare.

She was biting down on her lips so tightly that they turned extremely pale.

Eventually, her lips started to bleed.

Yeah, like what Shane said, it's not a nightmare. Mom's really gone!

At that moment, Natalie could not deceive herself anymore. She hugged Shane and started crying. Her wails were even louder and more despairing than when she was waiting outside the emergency room.

Her cries filled the entire hospital ward. It was a heart wrenching sight for Shane.

He did not stop Natalie from crying. Instead, he just let her be.

He knew that she needed to vent her inner despair and sorrow. Otherwise, it would be bad for her health.

"Why? Why?" Natalie punched the blanket as she sobbed, wallowing in self-blame. "Why didn't I stop my Mom from going to the Smith Residence? Why didn't I hold her back?"

If I had stopped her from going to the Smith Residence, perhaps she would still be alive!

Shane pursed his lips and remained silent. Life can be so unpredictable!

In the morning, Yulia was still eating breakfast with them happily. No one expected that she would be gone by afternoon, just like what happened to his grandfather.

Before his grandfather committed suicide, no one could tell that he had an inclination to do so. It was too late when Shane found out afterward.

“It’s all my fault... It’s all my fault!” Grabbing the blanket in anguish, Natalie blamed herself. When Shane heard that, he frowned. Cupping her face, he gazed at her sorrowful expression and said in a deep voice, “It’s not your fault! None of us expected that to happen, so you’re not to be blamed!”

Natalie’s lips trembled when she heard that. “B-But I had a chance to save Mom. I just let it slip and let her go to the Smith Residence alone just like that. I...”

Unable to continue her sentence, she lowered her head and covered her face.

Shane sighed inconspicuously and pulled her into his embrace again as a form of silent consolation.

After a long while, her sobs became much softer.

Shane lowered his head and gazed at her. With her head hung low and her eyes closed, she looked like a wilted flower. The look in her eyes was dull. Even her hair had lost its shine.

Natalie no longer looked as energetic and lively as she was usually. Instead, she seemed like a zombie.

Shane’s heart ached. He wanted Natalie to pull herself together, but he knew that it was impossible at that moment.