

When Natalie heard Jared's muffled sobs, tears rolled down her own cheeks as well. Burying her head against Shane's shoulder, she began telling him the details of their mother's passing.

Jared's eyes widened in horror after listening to everything, and he murmured, "Did Mom die because... because of me? If it wasn't for me, Mom would never have gone back to the Smith residence. It's all my fault, Nat. It's all my fault..."

Natalie's head snapped up and she quickly rebuked, "No, Jared. It's not your fault."

However, nothing could get through to Jared at that moment. Just like how Natalie behaved the day before, he was convinced that he was to blame for their mother's death.

To Natalie's surprise, Shane took the phone from her and advised, "Rather than blaming yourself over there, why don't you come back to deal with your mother's funeral instead?" "Who are you?" Jared's voice turned wary when he heard a man's voice on the phone instead of his sister's.

Shane met Natalie's eyes and answered, "Your brother-in-law."

Natalie blushed at that.

Jared's mouth fell open in surprise. "So you must be Shane, then?"

"Yeah." Shane nodded slightly. "I heard your conversation with your sister earlier. Neither of you is to be blamed for your mother's death. If you have to, blame Harrison and his wife, but before that, you should come back first because your sister needs you. You also need to come forward for your mother's lawsuit against the Harrisons."

Yulia's death hit Natalie and Jared the hardest. At least together, they could offer each other emotional support.

This would also help Natalie cope with her grief.

Jared sniffled and said, "I understand. I'll book a flight back immediately."

Shane hummed in approval and passed the phone back to Natalie.

After talking a while longer, Natalie ended the call.

With that, the two of them left the police station and went to the Smith residence to check out the scene of Yulia's accident.

The scene was sealed off by the police, and there were also a few officers investigating inside. Natalie and Shane had passes, so they were immediately allowed passage.

As soon as they entered, Natalie spotted the chalk outline on the floor which showed the exact spot where Yulia had lay sprawled after toppling down the stairs.

At the sight of that, Natalie squatted down and hid her sobs behind her hands.

Shane stood beside her, offering her silent support.

Natalie cried for a long time before her sobs finally died down. Inhaling deeply, she blinked her swollen eyes and was helped up by Shane.

Looking toward the second floor, she whispered, "I wanna go upstairs to have a look."

Shane nodded. "I'll go with you."

"Okay." Natalie squeezed a smile onto her face and climbed the stairs with his hands around her.

After crying so many times, her energy was completely depleted. Hence, without his support, she wouldn't be able to stand properly, let alone walk.

Not to mention, her legs had gone numb from squatting so long.

Soon, the two reached the second floor. Natalie went to stand by the railing and looked down.

Although this villa only had two floors, the second floor was more than ten meters above the first floor. Falling down the stairs like that could only mean one thing.

Grasping the railing with both hands, Natalie fixed her gaze on the chalk outline downstairs and said in a hoarse voice, "Shane, my mom must've been in so much pain when she fell down from here. Imagine how hopeless she must've felt."

Shane's gaze dimmed, but he remained silent.

Natalie wasn't expecting an answer from him anyway, since she was merely lamenting to herself.

The two of them stood there for a while, but found nothing suspicious. Later on, an officer came over to politely invite them out.

This was a crime scene, after all. Although Natalie and Shane possessed valid passes, there was still a time limit of one hour.

Now that one hour had passed, they were required to leave.

Natalie did not make things difficult for the officer either, leaving the Smith residence with Shane right away to return to their villa.

Due to Yulia's death, the two children had also taken time off from their kindergarten and stayed in the villa. Upon seeing Natalie and Shane come home, they immediately bounded over and threw themselves into their parents' arms.

"Mommy, do we not have a grandma anymore?" Sharon lifted her head and asked with red-rimmed eyes.

Natalie stroked her hair and put on a tough front. "Of course you do. Your grandma will always be your grandma. She just won't be with you from now on because she's gone to heaven."

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With that, she pointed to the sky.

Sharon blinked innocently and asked, "Really?"

Shane hoisted Sharon into his arms and answered for Natalie, "Yes. Grandma has become a star, and you can see her at night. She's the brightest one in the sky."

"Dad is right." Connor nodded.

He was smarter than Sharon, so unlike Sharon who did not fully comprehend the situation, he knew what death signified.

Thus, he did not mind dealing with his grief alone and hoped that Sharon could stay happy forever. After all, he had vowed to protect his sister for the rest of his life.

Since her parents and brother all said so, she believed them and stopped crying. After wiping her tears away, she giggled with delight. "Dad, I saw on TV that there are gods and goddesses. Is Grandma a goddess then? Is that why she's become a star?"

"Yes." Shane dipped his head and rubbed his forehead against hers.

Sharon giggled louder at that.

A small smile formed on Natalie's lips when she saw how easily he managed to coax Sharon.

Jared arrived back in the country that night itself.

Natalie picked him up and brought him back to the villa.

Upon seeing Shane, he extended his hand somewhat cautiously. "Nice to meet you, Shane."

"The pleasure is all mine." Shane reached out to shake his hand, sizing him up at the same time.

He bore a strong resemblance to Natalie, but due to his congenital heart disease, he had a thin frame and stood at a mere height of five feet five. He looked like he would be blown away by the wind at any second.

"Please, have a seat." Shane withdrew his hand and gestured to the couch.

Jared nodded and sat down.

Meanwhile, Natalie poured them both a glass of water.

Jared accepted the glass from her and took a small sip before speaking. "Nat, where is Mom now?"

"At the hospital," Natalie replied.

With the glass still in his hand, he queried, "Then when should we begin dealing with the funeral?"

Natalie gnawed on her lip to gather her thoughts before answering, "I originally planned to

deal with it after finding out the truth about Mom's death, but now, I'm not even sure if her death was accidental, or if she was murdered by Harrison and Susan."

There was really no solid evidence.

Jared understood that. As a result, his grip on the glass tightened, and he found himself lost for words.

In the end, it was Shane who broke the silence. "While the police are still investigating, I've also ordered Silas to arrange for some people to look into the case. If all goes well, they should have some news for us by tomorrow."

"The police will also have some news for us tomorrow, right?" Natalie twisted her fingers together.

Shane nodded. "Most probably."

Natalie lowered her eyes.

So the cause of Mom's death will be revealed tomorrow. We'll finally know if it was an accident or intentional murder.

"Anyway, you're probably tired after your flight. You should get some rest," Shane took Natalie's hand and said to Jared.

As if on cue, Mrs. Wilson came over right then. "Mr. Smith, please follow me. I'll show you to your room."

"Thank you, Mrs. Wilson." Jared stood up, then bid Shane and Natalie goodnight before following after Mrs. Wilson.

Shane glanced at Natalie and suggested, "C'mon, let's go back to our room as well. You must be tired after going out for the whole day. It's time to call it a night."

Natalie was in no mood to sleep, but her head felt heavy, so she had no excuse to refuse and eventually allowed him to lead her upstairs.

The next day, Natalie stayed home the entire day, waiting for the outcome of the investigation.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, the investigation was concluded.

She received a call from the police station, and was told that Harrison and Susan had nothing to do with Yulia's death – it was indeed an accident.

Even Silas' investigation came to the same conclusion.

Thus, Natalie no longer had a reason not to believe it.

She clutched the investigation report given by Silas tightly for a long time. When she finally let go, it was as though all the fight had drained out of her. "Jared, send out the invites. Let's prepare Mom's funeral."

"Okay." Jared nodded with reddened eyes.

Pinching his nose bridge, Shane offered his help as well. "I'll get someone to contact the cemetery."

"Mm." Natalie closed her eyes dejectedly.