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"I know." It was Natalie's turn to smile wryly.

Looking outside the cave, Sean suggested, "You can try to look for some food nearby if you

don't want to starve."

"There's food nearby?" Following the direction of his gaze, she shook her head.

"What could

we possibly find in a place like this? Are you asking me to hunt?"

He laughed at her question. "If you have the means, be my guest. I'm your excuse in case

any rangers decide to hold you to the law."

"I'm not going to hunt. I'll look around for some wild fruits. We can try to make our way out

after we eat," Natalie announced and stood up.

Sean watched wordlessly as she left the cave.

She was gone for a couple of hours, and she had found some wild fruits reminiscent of

kiwis. Despite their sourness, it was palatable enough to fill her stomach, and that was far

better than starving.

She ate about three of those fruits and fed the rest to Sean.

The fire went out around the same time they finished eating.

Natalie clapped her hands together and declared, "Let's go."

Sean followed without protest. He got to his feet with Natalie's help, and they left the cave in

slow steps.

Meanwhile, an exhausted Shane sat on his sleeping bag at a camping site located at the

foot of the mountain. His rumpled, mud-stained clothes added to his disheveled appearance. Fresh cuts marred his handsome face as well.

A doctor was applying ointment to his face while Silas stood beside him. Anxiously, he

asked, "Mr. Shane, do you have other injuries besides the cuts on your face?" Half an hour ago, Mr. Shane had gone into the mountains to search for his wife. He had slipped and rolled off the slope then; hence, the cuts on his face.

If Silas had not dragged him back here to get treated, he would still be scouring for Natalie

in the mountains.

"I'm fine," he said gruffly, resting his forehead in his hand.

Silas was still concerned. "Are you sure? We can drop by the hospital in town-"

"I said I'm fine!" Shane cut in fiercely.

Silas shut up after that.

Suddenly, a member of the rescue team drew back the mesh of the tent and came in. He

looked agitated as he said, "Mr. Shane, we have good news."

"Did you find her?" Shane's pupils widened, and he shot to his feet in an instant. The doctor who had been applying ointment on him was knocked back by his force. "No, but someone saw smoke coming from the mountains." The rescue team member

continued, "It's not the natural mist in the mountain forests, but smoke from a fire. We've

explored the area in the past, and we know that this forest is uninhabited. So the smoke-"

"It must have been from the fire that madam lit!" Silas interrupted excitedly. "Mr. Shane,

that's great! Madam's still alive!"

Shane's entire body was vibrating with barely concealed joy as he clenched his fists.

"Send your team there ASAP!" Silas gave the order when Shane remained silent. "Hold on," Shane said as he picked up his jacket. "I'm going too."

"No, Mr. Shane, you can't go. You've barely slept since yesterday. What if-" "I said I'm going!" Shane narrowed his eyes at Silas.

Silas opened and closed his mouth like a fish before sighing in resignation. "Ok." They made the necessary preparations and set off for the mountains.

The mountain was vast. By the time Shane and the rescue team reached the cave, it was

empty.

From the temperature of the ashes on the floor, it seemed like they had left not too long ago.

They probably had a maximum head start of two hours.

"Mr. Shane, if they're still walking, it means madam isn't seriously injured! Thank God for

that!" Gazing at the ashes on the ground, Silas finally felt a sense of relief.

Shane's relief was palpable as well. The tension in his brows relaxed slightly.

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Shane's joy was short-lived.

Alas, we missed them.

"Let's continue our search. The forest floor is still damp from the rain. They must've left

footprints behind. We can use those to find them," Shane announced and left the cave, Silas

following closely behind.

Soon enough, they came across two sets of footprints.

Judging by the sizes of the footprints, Shane was confident that they belonged to Sean and

Natalie.

They seemed to be headed south down the mountains.

"Let's go!" Shane led the way.

The rescue team hurried after him.

Natalie was clueless about Shane's knowledge of their survival, let alone his search and

rescue efforts.

She supported Sean the whole time as they walked. They did not know how much time had

passed when they finally saw a house.

A small smile appeared on Natalie's exhausted features.

Even Sean looked like a heavy burden had been lifted from his shoulders.

"Just a bit more," he croaked.

Natalie glanced at him before walking forward, steeling her nerves and ignoring her exhaustion.

That's our lifeline. Once we reach the house, I can finally contact Shane.

She used the last bit of her strength to hasten their arrival at the house. Ten minutes later,

they were at the front door.

A middle-aged lady opened the door. Shocked at their disheveled appearance, the woman

exclaimed, "You-"

Natalie mustered a weak smile on her face and fainted before saying anything to her.

"Oh dear," the middle-aged lady uttered in shock as she stepped forward to lift Natalie.

Without Natalie's support, Sean fell to the ground as well.

The lady helped them both into her house before asking, "What happened to the two of

you?"

Dialing up the charm, Sean fabricated an explanation. "We were out hiking in the mountain,

but we fell off the slope and lost our supplies. That's how we ended up like this." "You poor things," the lady exclaimed in pity at the sight of his splinted limbs.

Sean smiled and replied, "Ma'am, could you send me to the nearest town? I'll give you three

hundred thousand if you can arrange that."

"Three hundred thousand?" Her eyes lit up at his offer.

He nodded. "That's right."

"Of course, I'll ask my husband to send you in a moment," she agreed excitedly. Sean's smile widened. "Thank you."

"What about this young lady?" She pointed at Natalie, who was still unconscious. "Is she

your wife?"

Wife?

Taken aback, Sean shook his head. "No."

"She's not? You seemed so close just now. I thought you were married," she explained herself awkwardly.

Sean gazed tenderly at Natalie's face. "Ma'am, please take care of her. I have to leave now. I

won't be able to stay with her. Someone will come for her soon."

"Ok, I understand."

They're my golden tickets. I'll take care of her like she's royalty.

"Ma'am, please have someone send me to town. Once I'm there, I'll wire the money to you,"

Sean requested.

She nodded several times in agreement and called her husband over.

About an hour later, Sean arrived in town. After wiring the promised sum to the lady's

husband, he bought himself a new phone and called someone.

The line connected quickly. "Hello, who's calling?"

"Silas, it's me," Sean said.

Sean could only call Silas since Shane's phone was programmed to reject unknown numbers.

Thank God he answered.

Silas was stunned when he recognized Sean's voice. "Mr. Sean!"