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Despite the animosity in his tone, Zachary's words carried the weight of a man's responsibility and promise.

Charlotte expressed her gratitude again and was then stumped for words.

"Why are you so useless?" He glared at her. "Aren't you always acting like a tyrant whenever you're with me? Why were you being such a coward in front of him?"

His bombardment of questions stunned her. "When was I acting like a coward? I retorted him!"

"Retorted? You should've thrown that contract right in his face!" Zachary was exasperated. "Didn't you see the way he picked on you? Grow a spine, why don't you?"

Charlotte was speechless.

"You only bare your teeth at your own family, but you're a coward whenever you deal with outsiders!" the man spat out with a glare before turning to leave.

Charlotte stared at his back, unable to retaliate.

Bare my teeth at my own family? Are we even still considered family?

As that thought crossed her mind, an unusual emotion surged within her.

Upon getting into his car, Zachary ordered Ben, "Gather all the shareholders of the Gymnasium Project and have them see me in three days."

"Yes, Sir." Ben relayed his order at once.

At the same time, Zachary's phone kept ringing. Seeing that it was Robert trying to reach him, he rejected the call and blocked the latter's number.

"I've contacted all the shareholders," said Ben after hanging up his phone. "What do you intend to do, Mr. Nacht?"

“Robert has gone too far. He knows who Charlotte is to me, yet he went ahead and tried to push her around.” Zachary seethed. “It’s about time I teach him a lesson.”

“Understood.” Ben understood how protective he was of Charlotte. No matter what became of their relationship, Zachary would never let anyone pick on her.

Besides, the fact that Robert completely defied his warning and came looking for Charlotte infuriated Zachary even more.

Ben would have tried to talk his boss out of doing anything rash if it were before. However, he no longer intended to do so, considering Zachary’s condition.

He can do whatever he wants. Nothing else matters as long as it makes him happy.

“It’s still early. Do you want to see Ms. Gold?” Ben asked carefully.

Zachary pondered for a moment before replying flatly, “Not now.”

“All right.” Ben took his phone out. “I’ll reply to her text, then. She was asking about you.”

“Just tell her I’ll meet her another day.”

“Yes, Sir.”

Back in the middle of the mountain, Nancy was still waiting in the car. Since Zachary would pass by this route after dealing with his affairs, she was hoping to meet him again.

Yet, after waiting for so long, all she got was Ben’s text informing her that Zachary would not be heading down the mountain that day. As a result, they would not be able to meet.

Nancy felt utterly dejected. Every time she met Zachary, she would get her hopes up, only for her plans to be ruined time and time again. At that point, the usually placid woman could no longer keep a cool head.

It’s about time I take action.

“They’re here, Ms. Gold,” her subordinate reported softly.

Nancy raised her gaze and saw the white Bentley making its way down the mountain. It was the Laurent family’s car.

As expected, the fancy car came to a stop when the passenger in it caught sight of Nancy. Robert exited the vehicle with his subordinates and approached her. "Ms. Gold! What brings you here?" he asked courteously.

"If you hadn't come by, Sir Robert, I probably would've been on board Mr. Nacht's yacht by now."

Nancy spoke tactfully, but the meaning behind her words was obvious.

Robert was taken aback for a moment but quickly responded, "It looks like I've inadvertently ruined your date with Mr. Nacht. I'm truly sorry about that!"

"Did you come to see Ms. Lindberg?" Nancy asked, smiling.

"That's right," the man answered straightforwardly. "I wanted her to back out of the Gymnasium Project, but she refused. It doesn't help that Mr. Nacht's decided to interfere, so I'm in a bit of a tough spot now."

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"I'd suggest that you stop bothering Ms. Lindberg," said Nancy directly. "Although Mr. Nacht and her have separated, they are still friends. If someone bullies her, he'll definitely intervene!"

"That's weird." A puzzled look crossed Robert's face. "Mr. Nacht has an intricate relationship with Charlotte. Furthermore, he already has you, so why would he still protect Charlotte?"

"You'll have to ask Mr. Nacht about that. I'd like to know the answer too." She smiled. "I'm just reminding you kindly not to seek trouble for yourself. After all, you can't afford to offend Mr. Nacht."

"Do you have any advice?" He gazed at her broodingly.

"If I'm not mistaken, you must have hit a snag with Mr. Nacht earlier," said Nancy meaningfully. "Looking at how calm you are, it means that he has not threatened you yet. However, according to my understanding of him, he'll probably take action soon."

Robert was stunned. "Ms. Gold, are you saying that..."

"You shouldn't forcefully keep something that isn't yours. I suggest that you return the investment fund to her and act honestly. Perhaps, you might have a chance to survive."

She continued bluntly, "I know that your financial situation isn't doing well. If you rely wholly on this project to turn the tables, you'll lose everything once excluded from it."

"Are you saying that Zachary wants me out of this project?" Robert exclaimed in disbelief, "No way!"

"Why not?" Nancy sneered. "You've probably forgotten that he has never shown any mercy to his business rivals. Furthermore, your son snatched his beloved woman, and then you tried to coerce her into doing something against her wishes. Not only did you refuse to heed his warning, but you had also bullied her so openly. Don't forget who's on her side. Even if Charlotte has fallen from grace, she's still the mother of his children. By constantly testing his patience, you have already struck his raw nerve, so he'll definitely not show you any mercy."

Aghast, he thanked her hastily, "Thank you for your advice, Ms. Gold. I'll definitely repay your favor in the future!"

With that, he quickly entered the car with his subordinate. The moment the car doors slammed shut, he called his lawyer. "Return Charlotte's twenty billion investment to her immediately! Don't say anything and carry out my order right now!"

When the car moved forward, Robert even rolled down the car windows and waved at Nancy gratefully.

She inclined her head in acknowledgement.

After watching Robert's car zoom away, Nancy entered her car and headed down the mountain with her subordinate.

"I don't understand, Ms. Gold. Why did you advise him?" asked the subordinate, feeling puzzled.

"If he keeps seeking trouble with Charlotte, Mr. Nacht will keep protecting her. In that case, I'll have no chance to get closer to him," she explained calmly. "I advised him mainly because I want him to leave F Nation with his son quickly and stop interfering with my affairs. Furthermore, if I do him a favor now, it might help me in the future."

"I see." The subordinate nodded. "However, won't you be helping Charlotte indirectly too?"

"That is the third benefit." Nancy smirked. "She'll find out that I helped her soon enough. In that case, she'll owe me one."

"But even if you don't help her, Mr. Nacht will still intervene," replied the subordinate carefully. "The problem will still be solved."

"Charlotte might not agree to let Mr. Nacht help. Furthermore, even if he does take action, his harsh methods will definitely cause an outcry among the corporate world and damage Nacht Group's reputation. Neither of us wants him to do that, be it Charlotte or me."

Gazing at the villa at Southridge outside the window, Nancy raised her eyebrows. "Well, by doing this, I'm killing three birds with one stone. Charlotte will surely thank me!"

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Meanwhile, Zachary was at Southridge, instructing Rodney to deal with the Gymnasium Project's shareholder contract.

Suddenly, he received a call from Charlotte.

Surprised, he immediately accepted it. "Hello?"

"Just now, Sir Robert returned me the twenty billion investment fund." There was a hint of shock and uneasiness in Charlotte's voice. "Did you do something?"

That took him by surprise. Narrowing his eyes, he asked, "When did that old man become so sensible?"

"What did you do?" Charlotte pressed. "Don't do anything that'll affect you just for my sake. Although Nacht Group's position is stable, your reputation will be damaged if you threaten him and kick him out of the project. You'll even offend the royal family of F Nation."

"Are you worried about me?" asked Zachary.

"I'm dead serious!" She panicked. "Can you be serious for once too?"

"I haven't done anything yet," he replied succinctly. "Are you satisfied now?"

"What happened, then?" Charlotte was flabbergasted.

"Perhaps, someone advised him." Zachary already had a guess. "However, you don't have to bother yourself over it. What matters now is that the problem is solved."

"Who advised him?"

"I already said that you don't have to bother about it," he insisted adamantly. "Just focus on yourself."

Slightly infuriated, she replied, "Fine, as long as it wasn't you who did it. I don't want to owe you a favor."

"You owe me plenty of favors." Zachary's anger surged when he heard that. "Even your life is mine!"

"You..." Charlotte was rendered speechless. "I can't even be bothered to speak to you!"

With that, she ended the call.

Displeased by her attitude, Zachary frowned. A second later, he lifted his gaze and instructed Ben, "Tell Mr. Williams that he doesn't need to come over anymore."

"What about the shareholders?" asked Ben.

"The plan remains the same." Zachary placed his phone down. "Even if we don't kick that old man out of the project, we must still intimidate him."

"Understood." Ben immediately went to inform Rodney.

Then, Zachary picked up his phone, searched for Nancy's number in his contacts, and dialed it. "Ms. Gold, why don't we meet at six in the evening at Seacrest Restaurant?" he asked when she answered the call.

"Sure, Mr. Nacht!" Nancy agreed happily before asking, "You won't stand me up again, right?"

"I won't." He smiled slightly. "Send me your address, and I'll pick you up."

"Okay, I'll send it to you now."

After hanging up the call, Nancy sent him her address.

As instructed by Zachary, Ben quickly made the arrangements and asked, "Ms. Gold was the one who advised Sir Robert, right?"

"Even you guessed it?" Zachary smirked. "She's a smart woman."

"Impressively, her cleverness isn't annoying," Ben said softly. "By advising Sir Robert, she managed to make him return Ms. Lindberg's funds in time while making it unnecessary for you to intervene. That's killing two birds with one stone."

"What's her objective in doing this?" Zachary was analyzing the situation. "Does she want both me and Charlotte to owe her a favor?"

"There's probably one more reason," suggested Ben. "Because of Ms. Lindberg, you've already stood her up thrice. Furthermore, it's always Sir Louis and Sir Robert troubling Ms. Lindberg. By doing this, she can put an end to it."

"Indeed. She has put in a lot of thought into this," replied Zachary flatly.

"Ms. Gold really likes you," Ben remarked while observing his expression. "Do you..."

Zachary nodded. "She's a nice woman, astute but bears good intentions. Moreover, she's very thorough with whatever she does too. It's almost impossible to hate her. Well, we can be friends."

"Then..."

"I should still clarify it with her so that I won't waste her time." Zachary placed his phone down and massaged his temples tiredly. "I'm going to rest now. Remember to plan tonight's meeting well."

"Understood."

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Recently, it had been extremely easy for Zachary to feel lethargic. Although he had just woken up in the morning, he wanted to take a rest again.

Noticing how his health had been deteriorating, Ben could not help but feel concerned. If we still can't find Francesco, I'm afraid that...

At that thought, he was ridden with worry. After making the rest of the arrangements for Zachary and Nancy's meeting in the evening, he was thinking of calling Bruce when Lupine's call came in.

As she had asked to meet him, he had no choice but to delay the call.

Due to the lesson from last time, Ben became much warier and kept reminding himself not to let her pry out information from him.

Meanwhile, before Lupine left, Charlotte exhorted her repeatedly, "Remember what I said! You must dig out the truth from Ben."

"Understood." Lupine nodded.

"Go on, then." Charlotte gestured for her to leave, and she hurried out.

Ever since Charlotte discovered by chance that Zachary would lose his sight intermittently, she had suspected that something was wrong with his health. Although she had sent Lupine to investigate it, she did not find anything.

When she met Zachary earlier that day, she thought he looked rather pallid. Even his eyes seemed clouded. At that observation, worry gnawed at her.

Hence, she instructed Lupine to ask Ben out and fish for some clues.

Although Lupine was brilliant, she could not compare to Ben. With that in mind, Charlotte taught her a method and told her to act as instructed.

Ben and Lupine arrived at the agreed-upon meeting place simultaneously.

After getting into his car, she passed him an apple.

"Thank you!" Delighted, Ben took a bite of it.

Seeing how happy he looked, Lupine felt conflicted. Although he seemed like a capable man, he was actually easily coaxed. She promised to bring him some homemade food but only got him an apple as she did not have the time to cook. Yet, he was still contented with it.

"Thank you for today," said Lupine. "Sir Robert is simply too much. We were already prepared to take action, but we didn't expect Mr. Nacht to rush over and solve the problem."

"Although their relationship is very tense now, Mr. Nacht still cares about Ms. Lindberg deeply. He won't ignore her if she's in trouble," said Ben seriously. "If anything happens in the future, you must inform me in time. If we hadn't spotted Sir Robert's car while descending the mountain, things would have been messy."

"Ms. Lindberg doesn't want to be indebted to Mr. Nacht." She sighed. "I think that they care about each other deeply too. It's really pointless for their relationship to remain like this."

"I understand where Ms. Lindberg is coming from, though. After all, the Nacht family has harmed her greatly in the past. Family grudges can't be forgotten so easily."

He added, "However, from another perspective, she should put the past behind her now that Mr. Henry is dead, and Zara and the Blackwoods have fallen from grace. Furthermore, since Mr. Lindberg is missing now, the two families should join forces and work together."

"That's what I think too. It's just that Ms. Lindberg has too many concerns. Perhaps, they just need more time. Let's take it slow," she remarked woefully.

"We can't take it any slower," Ben blurted out. "Time won't wait for us."

"What?" Lupine shot him a puzzled glance.

He explained hastily, "Oh, I mean that the children are growing up, and they need their parents' love. Plus, Lindberg Corporation is in a crisis now, and Ms. Lindberg needs Mr. Nacht's help. We should think of a way to reconcile them."

"You're right. That's what I had in mind, too," she concurred.

"Great!" Ben was delighted. If Lupine were willing to cooperate, it would be much easier.

"I need to leave in ten minutes." Lupine glanced at her watch. "Dr. Langhan is coming over later."

"Raina? Is she going to treat Ms. Lindberg's wound? How is her recovery going?"

In response, she sighed. "Not great. It's been hurting terribly for the past two days. I even have to help wash her face in the morning."