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Hailey spoke each word slowly, "You saw me naked earlier, Declan."

Declan looked at her, "I didn't"

"Still denying it? Didn't you see me just now?"

Declan had no comeback. Of course, he saw. He wasn't blind.

Hailey's delicate face flushed a deep red. Just thinking about the scene earlier made her embarrassed and angry. She had thought it was Celine who came in, but it turned out to be him.

"What did you see, and what did you hear?" Hailey asked

However, Declan simply stayed silent. Hailey hated it when he ignored her like this. "Are you mute **now**?"

Declan replied, "You said you wanted a D cup

Hailey gasped, quickly placing her hand over his mouth to stop him. "Don't say it!"

Her small hand suddenly moved to cover his, closing the distance between them

in an instant.

As Declan looked into her captivating eyes, he found them filled with warmth like sunlight, just as they had been the first time he saw her.

It had been raining that day when he had unintentionally saved her. Back then, she had a birthmark on her face, but her eyes were just as beautiful as they were now. noveldrama

Declan gently pulled her hand away. "I didn't want to say anything. You made me."

Hailey huffed. "-Just shut up!"

"I'll leave then," Declan said.

He **moved** toward the door, but Hailey blocked it, hat letting him through. "Declan, you saw me naked. What are you going to do about it?"

Declan stared at the stubborn young lady. "What do you want me to do?"

Hailey thought for a moment. "Since you've seen me naked, I should see you naked too. That would make it fair."

Declan stared at her, speechless.

Hailey's competitive spirit was triggered. He **was** always so **aloof** and cool, never paying her any attention. Why should she be the only one to feel embarrassed after her body was seen? She wanted to see him too.

She grabbed the hem of his white tank top and pulled it up, but Declan shot out his hand and pressed down on the edge of his shirt.

"Hailey Young!"

Hailey's eyes lit up, and a sweet smile spread across her face. So he knew her name. "Declan, so you do know my name. I thought you didn't. Well, now I'm going to see your body."

She forced his shirt up higher. Soon, his sun-kissed skin was revealed. Unlike her soft, fair complexion, his was a healthy, tanned tone.

He had defined abs around his waist. Hailey slowly lifted her gaze, counting-one, two, three, four, five, six-six-pack abs.

He actually had six-pack abs.

His waist was narrow and toned, with black trousers cinched at the waist. The perfect V-shape of his body tapered into the pants, leaving little to the imagination

She kept pulling up his shirt. Soon, she saw the scars on his body. His skin was covered with a map of old and new scars, deep and shallow How could someone have so many scars? Hailey reached out her hand, gently tracing them.

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However, Halley didn't get the chance to touch Declan. He suddenly grabbed her slender wrists **and** pushed them up against the wall His tall frame

closed in on her.

"I only looked, not touched

So she wasn't allowed to touch him. Hailey blinked, surprised by how close he suddenly

She stamnered, "A-Are you flirting with me?"

y was. I

His cold, handsome face was now right in front of hers.

Declan froze, realizing that their bodies were pressed so close together. With her wrists pinned, her chest was against his. The situation was undeniably.

Intimate

He quickly released her wrists and took **two** steps back, putting some space between them,

Hailey felt **a** warmth flooding her nose. She reached up and touched it, only to find blood on her fingers.

"Shit! I'm bleeding!" she exclaimed.

Declan glanced at her and saw the blood trickling from her nose. He pulled out two tissues and handed them to her. "Tilt your head back. It'll stop soon. Hailey took the tissues and looked up. "Why am I bleeding?"

Declan didn't **answer**. He opened the door and stepped outside.

The cold wind hit him immediately, chilling his face, but it was enough to shake off the lingering warmth of Hailey's presence.

After stopping the nosebleed, Hailey chased after him. "Declan, wait up! Why do you have so **many** scars?"

Declan didn't slow down. His strides were long and determined. Nevertheless, Hailey didn't give up. She chattered beside him, "Are all those **scars** from fighting? You really need to stop fighting and focus on your studies. Knowledge is the best way forward."

Declan remained silent, acting like she wasn't even there.

Just then, a group of young ladies suddenly appeared ahead, led by Hattie. Hattie stormed up, furious. "Stop right there, Hailey. My people are here. Let's see if you're scared

age to come looking for Halley. The latter immediately stepped forward. "I'm not scared-

She had some courage to

But before she could finish, Declan moved to stand in front of her. His tall, **lean** figure shielded her, and he stared coldly at Hattie.

Hattie faltered. The truth was, she really **loved** Declan. She had turned down many wealthy heirs because she really had feelings for Declan. "Declan, L."

Declan parted his lips and coldly spat out,

"Get lost!" noveldrama

He actually asked Hattle to get lost.

Hattie's face turned pale. Disappointment, hurt, and humiliation all hit her at once. She clenched her fists.

"I really love you, Declan. I've put aside my pride and pursued you for so long. **Why** are you doing this to me? Why are you so heartless?"

Declan looked at her with indifference. "I don't like you."

Hattie's face turned ghostly pale from the public rejection. "You don't like me? Then who do you like? Is it her?"

Hattie pointed at Hailey, who was standing behind Declan. "Have you fallen for Hailey?"

Declan didn't respond.

In a woman's mind, a man's silence was always an acknowledgment. Hattie's emotions began to spiral. "Declan, do you really like her? You're protecting her now, but you've never done that for me! **What's** so special about her? Why is she better **than** me?"

Declan's patience had run out. "Are you leaving or not?"

Hattie was seriously hurt. She sneered. "You think you're something special, Declan? You're just a drug dealer's son. You still have to support your

mother and sister!

"Others don't know what you d

you do when you're not in school, but I do. You work **on** construction sites, doing multiple jobs. You're just a pauper!" Hailey's fists clenched in anger, and she stepped forward "Do you think this is appropriate, Hattie?"

Hattle glanced Halley up and down. Eventually, her gaze Landed on the crystal hairpin in Hailey's hair "Hailey, **that** tiny little hairpin you're wearing is from Chanel's new line, **isa't** it? It costs around **3,800** dollars, right?"

Halley froze for a moment. The hairpin she **was** wearing had been a gift from her aunt.

Hattie smirked. "You can just wear a 3,500–dollar Chanel hairpin like it's nothing, but **it** would take Declan forever to earn that kind of money. think you two are a good match?"

Halley put her hands on her hips. "What does it matter to you if we're a good match? You **and** Declan aren't right for each other, anyway!" Hattie fumed. "How dare you!"

At that moment, Declan looked at Hattie and said, "I don't want to see you again. Don't make me say it a third time!"

Hattie felt both love and fear toward Declan. As his cold, piercing gaze landed on her, she couldn't help but shiver,

"I'll just wait and see, Declan. You and Hailey won't end well" With that, Hattie turned and left, taking her group with her noveldrama

Hailey sighed in relief. "Finally, she's gone. Don't let her fool you, Declan. Don't ever date her. She badmouthed you!"

Declan glanced at Hailey. "What did she say about me?"

Hailey didn't want to hurt his pride, so she was vague. "She mentioned your family situation."

Declan wasn't surprised. His background wasn't a secret, and he couldn't care less what people said about it.

He looked at Hailey's beautiful eyes and asked, "Is that why you fought with her?"

Hailey nodded. "Yes!"

Suddenly, Declan stepped closer. His **tall** figure loomed over her as he asked, "Do you have feelings for me

His question made Hailey's heart **race**. She had never felt this way before. Her **heartbeat went out** of control, and her face **was** flushed with color. With Ewan, everything had been calm and uneventful, but with Declan, just being near hirm made her cheeks burn.

Do you

It was the first time she had ever felt this way about a man. She had really developed feelings for Declan. **She** had been drawn to him the night he had appeared before her in the rain..

Hailey looked at him. "L"

Declan could already tell from the look in her eyes. He'd seen it from other ladies, **including** Hattle, who had pursued him with that same gaze.

He took another step forward. "Do you want me to be your boyfriend?"

Hailey nervously tugged at her sleeve. She was shy, but he wasn't one to hide her feelings. When she liked **someone**, she would voice it out. She looked up at him. "**So**... would you?"

Would he be her boyfriend? Declan shook his head. "No." Hailey froze at once.

Declan's face remained **expressionless as** he added, "Don't **waste** your time on me. I don't like you." With **that**, he turned and walked away. Hailey stood there, stunned. He didn't like her? But then why did he ask?

As she watched his cold figure retreat, she stomped her foot in frustration. Why didn't he like her?

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Just then, Melody's voice came from behind Hailey. "Did you hear that, Ewan? Halley confessed her feelings to Declan, but he totally rejected her. It's hilarious!"

Hailey turned around to see Melody and Ewan.

The news of Hailey and Hattie's fight **had** already reached Melody. She immediately called Ewan **over**, so they saw everything that had just happened between Hailey and Declan

Ewan glared at Hailey with a displeased expression, while Melody looked on with a satisfied smirk.

Hailey wasn't bothered by their presence. She didn't feel embarrassed about being rejected. "Oh, two nost

After saving that, she tumed to leave.

Melody was stunned for a second. Meanwhile, Ewan quicldy stepped in front of Hailey. "Do you really like Declan

Hailey nodded finnly. "Yeah, I do."

Toppers."

Ewan still couldn't accept it. "No way. How could you like that guy? You're just trying to get back at me, right? Hailey, I never thought you'd play these childish games to grab my attention."

Halley sighed in frustration "Listen to me, Ewan. We're done. We were young back then, and I forgive you for using me and cheating on me. I don't have any feelings for you anymore. I like Declan now."

ow in love with someone else.

Ewan couldn't believe it. Allse, the girl who had always followed him, was now

"Hailey, do you even know what kind of person Declan is? His background is so low. How could he afford to take care of you? Or are you planning to support him yourself?

Hailey frowned. "What makes you so special, Ewan? Just because you were born with **a silver** spoon in your mouth doesn't make you better than Declan. "I like him. End of story. And if that's a problem for you, too bad."

"Hailey Young" Ewan's face turned red with fury.

"Move, Ewan Don't block my way."

However, Ewan stood firm, glaring at Hailey.

Hailey turned to Melody, "Is this why you brought Ewan here, Melody? To have him pester me?"

Melody's expression darkened. The truth was, Ewan had been distant

with her lately. They were no longer **sweet** and affectionate like when they'd been sneaking around.

She brought Ewan over just to let him see Hailey make a fool of herself, but Ewan actually couldn't stop getting tangled up with Hadley.

Melody quickly stepped forward and wrapped her arm around Ewan's. "Ewan, you and Hailey are not engaged anymore. You have nothing to do with her now. If she likes Declan, that's her business. Since the show has ended, let's just leave."

She tried to drag Ewan away, but his fare was darkc. He showed no intention of leaving, "Halley, you just don't know when to quit. Fine then! I'll take you right now to see what kindal person Declan really is."

With that, he forcefully shook Melody off. She stumbled backward awkwardly, struggling to regain her balance.

Ewan didn't spare her a glance. Instead, he grabbed Hailey's **slender** arm and started pulling her away

Melody seethed with rape

"Ewan!" What had gotten into him?.

He pulled Halley toward his car. As the heir of the Shaw family, one of the most elite households, it was only natural tor him to drive a Ferrari sports Hailey struggled against his grip "Let go, Ewan! You're hurting me!"

Ewan plaur id down and realized that his grip had been too strong. He had left a red mark on Hailey's wrist.

As he looked at Hailey, he noticed how her birthmark was gone. Now, luer face was smooth and flawless, and her eyes shone brightly. She looked just a soft, delicate red rose. noveldrama

Ewan released her wrist and opened front passenger door. "Then get in."

"I don't want to!"

"I'm taking you to see Declan, Allie. Don't

to know what lur's up to?"

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Hailee st

stopped struggling when she heard Ewan's words. She quietly got into the **front** passenger seat of the Ferrari.

Ewan took the driver's seat and shot her a dark look. "Are you so curious about Declan?"

At first, she wouldn't get **into** his car, but now she did it just for Declan.

Hailey looked up at Ewan. "Ewan, don't you think you're acting really weird?"

Evan froze for a moment

"I've already let you be with Melody. She's your girlfriend now. She's got a great figure, and she's a dancer, You like that type, don't you? You should be with her, so why **are** you still bothering me?"

Ewan gripped the steering wheel tighter. "L

"Don't tell me that you've developed feelings for me."

Seeing the mockery and sarcasm in Hailey's eyes, Ewan felt his anger flare. He let out a sneer. "Don't flatter yourself, Allie. I could never like you."

"Good"

Hailey wasn't interested in his feelings. His affection now was **too** late and meaningless.

Н

Ewan realized his feelings were driven by possessiveness. Hailey had always been around him, but now she had moved on and was interested in Declan, who was also his rival. It made him feel uneasy.

If Hailey was trying to get his attention, then she had succeeded.

Half an hour later, the Ferrari pulled up in front of a construction site. Hailey got out of the car. She had never been to a construction site before. The environment was just as chaotic as the place where Declan lived.

As she looked around, she accidentally stepped into the mud with her leather shoes.

Ewan noticed her shoes. "Your shoes are dirty. Do you want me to get a tissue to clean them?"

Hailey shook her head. "No. You **said** you were bringing me here to see Declan, Where is he?"

Ewan pointed ahead with his chin. "Over there."

Hailey looked up and saw a group of workers in blue uniforms and yellow hard hats. Among them, a tall and cold figure stood out. That was Declan Declan was working at the construction site.

Hailey had heard Hattie mention that Declan worked multiple jobs, even at construction sites. Now, it was clear **that** it was true.

She watched Declan. His **work** uniform **was** covered in dust, and sweat was dripping as he carried cement bags.

He was focused on his task, unaware of their arrival.

Ewan smirked. "See that? Is that really the guy you like? How could someone like him even deserve **your** attention?"

Halley's gaze stayed on Declan. He was lifting bag after bag of cement. He had to carry many at once it he wanted to get more

He carried a total of nine bags at once. The Javy load made his strong back bend slightly under the weight. Halley turned to Ewa "Let's go back."

Without another word, star began walking away-

Ewan happily followed behind. He knew that once Hailey had **seen** what Declan **was** really like, she you. Don't waste your time with someone like lilim noveldrama

Pay

would give up. Now you see that Declan isn't right for

"Ewan," Haley interrupted. "I'm leaving because I don't want to disturbi Declan. He has his pride, and hope you **won't** bother him in the future either." What? Ewan froze. He thought she had lost interest in Declan, but Hailey was simply trying to protect Declan's pride.

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Ewan clenched his fist. "Hailey, Declan put a spell on you, didn't

"That's none of your business either" retorted Halley.

Placing his arms on his hips, Ewan let out a frustrated laugh. "Fine. Then my business is none of yours either! I'm going to look for Declan now."

With that. Ewan turned around and walked toward Declan.

Hailey's expression changed instantly, and she instinctively grabbed Ewan's arm. "What are you doing?

"This is someone else's workplace. **What** makes you think you can go in and disturb the workers?"

Just them, the head contractor of the construction site came running breathlessly. He greeted them respectfully.

"Mr. Ewan, what brings you here? This is a dirty and messy place. Please be careful not to dirty your clothes. Are you here to observe the site today?"

Hailey was stunned. Glancing at her, Ewan smirked, "Oh, I forgot to tell you. This is one of my family's buildings. That makes this construction site my family's Surely there's no problem for me to observe the work?"

It had slipped Hailey's mind that the Shaws were in the property business. Coincidentally, Declan was working at the Shaw's territory.

Turning to the head contractor, Ewan said, "I heard there's a worker named Declan Zamora here, is that **true?**

,,

answered the head contractor

"Get him over here," Ewan demanded

The head contractor shouted, "Declan, come over here!"

Declan put down the bag of cement from his shoulder and lifted his head to find himself looking at Ewan a

Ewan and Hailey,

The construction site was filled with contractors. Hence, a Ferrari would be conspicuous in such a place. On top of that, a well-dressed and good-looking duo like Ewan and Hailey was easy to spot at one **glance**.

Declan wore his usual **cold**, indifferent expression as he strode over. Smiling, the head contractor said, "Mr. Ewan, this is Declan. He might be young, he's a tough coole. He can do all sorts of work."

but

The head contractor liked Declan, Glancing at Declan, Ewan said, "What a coincidence, Declan. I didn't think you'd work at my family's construction site.

Eyeing Ewan expressionlessly, Declan asked, "Is there anything you need? I'll get going if there's nothing else."

Hailey said hurriedly, "We're good, Declan. You should get back to work

" She wanted to pull Ewan away from the spot.

But to her disthay, Ewan smiled and said, "Declan, how many cement bags can you lift in one go?" noveldrama

The head contractor answered, "Mr. Ewan, Declan can carry litt eight in one goo Our strongest worker here **can** only lift tive.

"How about this, Declan? If you can break your record and lift one more, I'll give you one thousand dollars. If you can litt two more, you'll get two thousand

"I've got lots of money. So let's see how many you can lift

Stunned, the head contractor said, "Mr. Ewan, that's not a good idea. Eight bags of cement are a

already very heavy. It's dangerous to add more to that

Ewen grinned at Derlan. "You want to make money, don't you? Well, I'm giving you an opportunity."

Hailey's expression, fomed grim. "Ewan, are **you done** messing around? Do you need to do this just because you feel superior?"

Cilarring at Hailey, **Lacan** rebuked, "I'm not forcing him. I'm just offering my money in exchange for some fun while Declan wants to make some money.

With that, Ewan turd to Declan "Aury

Halley wanted to stop it from happening. "Declan, don't listen to him."

However, as soon as she finished speaking, Declan said, "Sure."

Declan's reply left Hailey sumed. Meanwhile, the head contractor brought a stool for Ewan to sit on while he watched Declan take up the challenge.

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Hoping to prevent the challenge from happening, Hailey came to Declan and said, "Declan, you don't need to take up the challenge. You'll get hurt. If you

need money.

Lean

Declan shot Hailey a glare, and she immediately stopped talking. She did not mean to insult him-she just didn't want him to get hurt.

Turning to the head contractor, Declan informed, "We can begin."

One by one, the head contractor placed bags of cement over Declan's shoulders. Soon, there were eight bags on Declan. Then, the head contractor placed the ninth and tenth bags over Declan's shoulders,

Ewan clapped, deeply engrossed in the performance

"I never knew you'd work so hard for money. Here's one thousand... Two thousand..." said Ewan as he threw two thousand dollars onto the ground noveldrama

As the head contractor added the two more bags, Ewan threw more money onto the ground. "Three thousand... Four thousand..."

Declan's face was expressionless despite carrying 12 cement bags over his shoulders. However, beads of wat could be seen rolling down his forehead. Even his uniform was soaked in his sweat

Hailey desperately wanted to put an end to the challenge, but anything she said at that point would come out wrong. Thus, she could only watch in silence

The head contractor could not bear to put another bag of coment over Declan's shoulders, for the latter was around his son's age. "Declan, just let me know if you can't take anymore."

But since Declan said nothing, the head contractor had no choice but to continue adding two more bags.

"Five thousand... Six thousand "Ewan had thrown six thousand dollars onto the ground.

Hailey watched Declan with worry. She knew he was a man with a proud spirit, but his back was already bending from the 14, cement bags

Looking at Ewan, Hailey begged, "That's enough, Ewan. Stop it already."

Just then, Declan's phone rang, **and** the head contractor immediately said, "Declan, let's end this here. You've got a call."

Upon hearing that, Declan sent the 14 bags of cement to their designated location before returning to the crowd

Glancing at the money on the ground, Ewan said, "There's your money, Declan. Take it. You earned it."

Declan lowered his gaze and reached out to pick up the **money**. However, a pair of fair, dainty hands got to them before him.

Crouching, Halley picked up the money and dusted it before shoving it into Declan's **hands**. "Here. All six thousand dollars are here."

Declan met Hailey's eyes and took the **money**. He then cast Ewan a cold gaze. "Thank you, Mr. Ewan. If you're in the mood to bully someone using money next time, you can call me. I'd be happy to play with you."

Ewan shot to us feel. "You!"

He did not expect Declan to be so casual about it instead of feeling inferior.

Declan pulled out his phone to find out it was his mother calling him. However, **instead** of hearing his mother's voice, he heard Aileen's voice when he

A flustered Aileen cried, "Declan, what do we do? Something happened to Mom."

Declan tensed "What happened to Mom, Aileen? Calm down and tell me what happened."

"Mom suddenly fainted today. Our neighbor and I brought her to the hospital, but the staff here says we need to send her to the general hospital to **do a** full body checkups

"Where's the general hospital, Declan? I'm scared..."

Aileen was only a girl in her third year of junior high school. Naturally, she panicked when it came to **emergencies** like that.

Gripping the phone, Declan said, "Aileen, P'm coming over now."

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Declan ran off as soon as he hung up

"Declan, where are you going? Wait for me!" Hailey called out.

Hailey was about to hurry after Declan when Ewan grabbed her hand. "What **for** are you going with him? I won't allow it,"

Pushing Ewan away, Hailey snapped, "It's none of your business!" With that, she dashed after Declan, leaving Ewan balling **his** fist in anger.

By the time Hailey arrived at a small hospital with Declan, she saw Pamela lying unconscious on the bed.

Standing beside the bed was Aileen, comforted by the neighbor that came along. Alleen looked pale from the shock and was crying non-stop.

Declan hurried forward and cried out, "Alleen!"

Upon seeing him, Aileen threw herself into Declan's arms, breaking down into tears. "Declan, hurry up an matter how many times I call out to her."

Declan said a few words to comfort Aileen **before** looking at his mother, who was lying on the bed. "**Mom**!"

Sadly, **there** was no response.

eck on Mom. She isn't waking up no

The neighbor urged, "Declan, you guys should quickly send her to the general hospital. The doctor dropped by earlier and said she needed to be checked at the general hospital immediately.

"The problem is that there are limited beds at the general hospital, and we don't know which doctor is better. What do **we** do?"

The neighbor sighed despondently. She knew Declan's father had passed **away** long ago, and Declan had been providing for his mother and sister. "Misfortune always comes to the unfortunate," she thought.

Before Declan could say anything, Hailey hurried over. "I have an idea. Let me make the arrangements, I know someone in the general hospital." Aileen turned to Hailey, sobbing "Hailey"

Taking out her phone, Hailey her. "Don't worry. I'll make a call now.

Declan placed his hand over Hailey's phone, but the latter locked up at him and **said**, "Declan, now's not the time to be modest, I can settle this with **one** phone call"

After a few seconds of silence, Declan retracted his hand. Halley immediately dialed a number. "Hey, Dad."

Once the call ended, Hailey said to Declan, "All right. Someone's coming soon."

Sure enough, a group of medical staff dressed in white rushed over and transferred Pamela into the **ambulance** using a stretcher.

The doctor said, "Ms Hailey, the patient's physical mechanism is working fine. She's been put **on** a ventilator.

"The director of Haven Hospital is waiting for her. Once she arrives, they will conduct a full body examination." noveldrama

Nodding, Hailey responded, "Okay." She then turned to Declan and Alleen. "Declan, Aileen, let's go to Haven Hospital." Everyone rushed over to Haven Hospital Pamela was handed to the director, Oscar Lyon, for an examination. Two hours later, Pamela was pushed into the VIP ro

bed.

"Mom!"

room. She was awake, Silence instantly blanketed the chaotic **room**, and Alleen hurried over to Pamela's

Pamela could not see anything, and her voice was weal. She reached out to pat Alleen's head. "I'm fine, Alleen" Holding Pamela's hand, Declan asked, "Why did you suddenly faint, Mom?

Smiling, Pamela answered, "I've gotten old, I guess. Don't worry."

Hailey, who had been watching them in the corner, came up and greeted, "Hello, M before."

Mrs. Zamora. I'm Hailey. I'm not sure if you

u remember me, but we

Of course, Panela remembered Halley. All mothers liked girls from good families, well-**educated**, and had polite personalities. Smiling, Pamela said, "Halley, right? Of course, I remember you. Why haven't you visited these **days**? I was just asking Declan about you,"

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Hailey's lips curled into a smile. "I didn't want to disturb you, so I've been hanging out with Declan at school." Her words made Pamela smile.

Just then, Oscar showed up, and Hailey exited the room. After settling down in Oscar's office, Oscar handed Hailey a report and **said**, "Ms. Halley, the patient's report is out."

"How is it?" asked Hailey.

Shaking his head, Oscar announced, "The patient has late-stage cancer."

Stunned, Hailey questioned, "Late-stage cancer? Are you sure? Mrs. Zamora has been fine all this while."

"I'm sure. The patient must've been diagnosed a few **years** ago. She knew about it, but she never received any treatment nor told anyone about it.

"And now, the cancer has spread to her heart and brain. She only has two months left."

Hailey slumped into the chair. She never expected Pamela to have only two months left to live.

Hailey could not help but wonder why Pamela never told anyone about it or received treatment. Even worse, her children had no idea about it.

The neighbor, Nicole Walsh, and Aileen sat beside Pamela. Aileen poured a glass of water and offered it to her.

"Have some water, Mom."

Leaning against the bedhead, Pamela took a sip and said, "Thank you so much, Ms. Walsh."

Nicole held Pamela's hand. "There's **no** need for that. **We've** been neighbors for the longest time. I know it hasn't been easy taking care of two children alone."

Glancing at her teenage daughter, Pamela said, "We managed no matter how tough it was. It's going to be tough on Declan now that he's an adult." Nicole let out a sigh. "Declan's **a** strong and outstanding man, just like his father. He's grown into a great man." noveldrama

At the mention of Declan's father, Pamela's eyes feddened. Nicole immediately realized she had misspoken

Declan's father had always been the **Zamoras** sacred pain. A mere mention of him would reopen the emotional wounds in their hearts.

In fact, Pamela had not been born blind. She lost her sight by crying too much after losing her husband.

Nicole quickly changed the topic, commenting, "**That** girl, Halley, is really pretty. She has **a** small face, fair skin, and bright eyes. Even her figure is great. I've never seen such a pretty girl before. She's definitely a city girl."

Pamela beamed. "Is that so? Actually, I could tell she's **a** sweet and beautiful girl just by how she **talks**."

Smiling proudly, Alleen chimed in, "Mom, Halley is really pretty."

Nicole added, "I think she's well-educated too **since** she goes to the same university as Declan. Most importantly, I have a feeling that she's from a prominent family with connections.

"**She** got you transferred to this hospital with just one call. Besides, that doctor who examined you? I've seen him on television before. He's **a very** ductor

"Is she Declan's girlfriend? I'm happy for him. He's found himself such a good girlfriend."

Pamela had been listening to her neighbor in silence until she heard that statement. "You mustn't make such reputation

such **claims**. It could ruin that young lady's

"I'm sure Halley is pursued by many guys out there. Besides, Declan isn't that lucky y to date someone like her. He didn't tell me he's dating anyone."

skilled

Patting Pamela's hand, Nicole said, "I know what you mean, but Declan's grown up now. He's got to find himself a partner one day. Don't you want him to get married and have children? He'll be alone forever if he doesn't."

Pamela said nothing in response while Aileen chirped naively, "Declan won't be alone. He still has me."

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Nicole gave Aileen's head a gentle tap. "Your brother loves you the most. He even sent you to the best junior high. He wouldn't want you to keep him company like an old hag."

Aileen chuckled. Just then, Halley entered the ward.

"Hey, Hailey," Aileen greeted cheerily.

Getting to her feet, Nicole asked, "Did you get the examination report, Hailey?"

Hailey's eyes were red-rimmed as she nodded. "Yes."

Her reaction caused Aileen to ask anxiously, "What's wrong with my mom? Is she sick?"

Hailey only stared at Pamela in silence. Realizing something was not right, Nicole said, "Aileen, come out with me for a second. I have something to tell

You"

Not suspecting anything, Aileen responded, saying "**Okay**." With that, Aileen and Nicole left the ward.

Now that Hailey and Pamela were the only ones in the ward, Halley sat beside the bed and studied Pamela. The latter was dressed in a set of clean but old clothes.

kind

d **as** ever.

Although the colors had faded, her clothes **were** clean and neat. Most of the **hair** on Pamela's head had turned grey, but she still looked as Hailey's mother was around Pamela's age. Her mother, who was traveling in Eapifora, would buy pretty dresses and dress up nicely. According to Halley's mother, women liked to dress up prettily. Hence, it was not that Pamela did not like to dress up prettily, but she lived a very different life.

"Hailey, you saw my examination report, didn't you?" asked Pamela,

Nodding, Hailey said, "Yes. You have late-stage cancer." noveldrama

Smiling. Pamela explained, "I know. Four years ago, I tainted at home. **So**, I visited the hospital to get checked. That was when I found out there was something wrong with my body."

"Why didn't you get it treated, Mrs, Zamora? If you did, you probably wouldn't be in such a state."

"Maybe. Even the doctor said there was a possibility. Perhaps I would we lived longer if I had taken out around a million dollars to pay for the treatment. "But Aileen was still young, and Declan was not an adult yet. He had it harder back then. When his father died, we were left to repay a debt of two million.

"With my disability, I couldn't do anything. So, Declan secretly skipped school to take up part-time jobs.

"Due to

his age, he had trouble making people listen to him. That's why he got tattoos, a buzz cut, and treated everyone coldly."

While saying that, Pamela raised her hand. **Sensing** that Pamela wanted to hold her hand, Hailey quickly took it. Pamela's palm was covered in thick calluses that were rough to the touch.

Smiling warmly, she asked, "Is Declan always cold to you?"

Hailey nodded. "He treats everyone like that. He never smiles,"

"Declan wasn't born like that. He always smiled in the past, and he looked good when he did. But after **his** father left, the three of us **were** left to fend for ourselves. His father was a drug dealer, so people always criticized **us** wherever we went.

"He stopped smiling to prevent others from bullying us," explained Pamela.

Hailey felt miserable. As someone who grew up showered with love and **care**, Declan's life was the most heart–wrenching event she had ever known. Ever since Halley got t to know Declan's **family**, she felt as if she had encountered a completely different life.

"On top of all that, my family had mountains of delats. We barely had one million. Even if we did, I would never use it on something that's a mere possibility

"For the past

years, I've been praying every day so I **could** live longer. At least until Declan had grown up. I wanted to stay by his side for a few more