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These days, the Gillian family was a nightmare to Lila. Every morning she woke up, she'd pray that Jeff wouldn't come asking for money again.

Eva and Glenn kept threatening her with suicide every day, which took a toll on her mental health. She was on the verge of breaking down. She didn't want to deal with these psychos anymore.

She had never met lunatics like the Gillian family in her life. And she never would've met them if it weren't for Janet.

Janet was the cause of all her suffering.

Her misery and misfortune were all caused by her!

So when Jeff proposed that they blackmail Janet, she agreed without hesitation.

How come Janet got to enjoy the perfect life of being the daughter of the White family while she had to endure such a misery with the Gillian family?

"Well? What do you have in mind?" Lila was in no mood to waste time. She just wanted Jeff to target Janet instead of her.

Jeff didn't expect that she would be so excited about this. When he got over his initial surprise, he chuckled and said, "You have to ask her out. I'll ask someone to take care of the rest."

Without hesitation, Lila took out her phone and called Janet. However, the call never connected.

"What happened? Why isn't she answering your calls?" Jeff's smug smile instantly disappeared.

Lila grew anxious, too. She had tried to hurt Janet several times now. It made sense that Janet was on guard against her.

"Let me try one more time."

Lila kept dialing Janet's number. She didn't get through to Janet until the tenth try.

"What do you want?" Janet asked coldly.

All of a sudden, Lila burst into tears. "Janet, finally! You answered my call. I just wanted to apologize for everything I've done. It wasn't until I joined the Gillian family that I realized how nice you were to me."

"Oh," Janet said emotionlessly. "Anything else?"

"No, no... But I'd like to apologize to you in person. How about we have a meal together? I've done so many terrible things but I never apologized properly to you. I have to do it in person, or else I'll never forgive myself!" Lila spoke as sincerely as she could.

Janet fell silent.

This wasn't her first rodeo with Lila. She doubted Lila had pure intentions.

Just as she was about to refuse, Ethan covered the phone.

She looked at him in confusion. He whispered in her ear, "Agree to meet her. I want to see what trick she's playing."

Ethan's eyes were cold as ice.

He had no sympathy for Lila. In his eyes, she was nothing but trouble. He could seize this as an opportunity to get her out of the picture permanently.

Janet nodded. Then, she sighed into the phone with flourish, pretending to be helpless. "Fine. We were once a family, so we should talk this out."

Lila grew excited. She paused for a few seconds and replied, "Okay. Let's meet up at the steakhouse at Glorie Street tomorrow at 10."

The following day, Janet arrived at the steakhouse on time.

Before she got off the car, Ethan cupped her cheeks and kissed her. "Act natural. If anything suspicious happens, text me. I've stationed my men here, so you'll be safe."

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Janet was left breathless from the deep kiss. She pinched Ethan's cheek and smiled shyly. "I'm not a child anymore. I can handle this. I'll get going now, okay?"

Glorie Street was an old and remote block. There was only one restaurant here—the steakhouse Lila mentioned.

It wasn't a particularly clean restaurant. There were all sorts of bugs and flies all over the place.

In the restaurant sat a group of tough-looking men with tattoos covering their arms. With toothpicks in their mouths, they looked just like a bunch of hooligans.

As soon as Janet stepped foot inside the steakhouse, they all turned to look at her with eager eyes.

Lila stood up and waved at her from the table near the door. "Janet, over here!"

Janet nodded in greeting.

They hadn't seen each other for over a month. Lila had lost a lot of weight. Her makeup was not as pristine as before, and her eyes were full of undisguised fatigue.

"I know several good cafes in the area. How about we talk there?" Janet suggested, glancing at the men from the corner of her eye.

"This place is owned by a friend of Jeff's. I don't have that much money now, so I could only afford the food here," Lila explained with a smile. "Oh, Jeff's my brother."

Left with no choice, Janet sat down at the table.

The restaurant was empty other than the group of men. There were barely any people outside, too. This was clearly a place for doing illegal stuff.

The staff soon brought them two plates of steak. Lila pushed one of them in front of Janet and said, "Try it. I like their food."

As she spoke, she glanced meaningfully at the man who had served the steak just now.

She knew that Jeff and his friends were hiding in the kitchen.

With Ethan guarding outside, Janet wasn't afraid at all. She sliced a piece of her steak and put it in her mouth.

Suddenly, Jeff burst out of the kitchen, holding a stick and some ropes, followed by a group of thugs.

However, before they could even get close to Janet, a group of men in black swarmed inside the restaurant.

In a matter of seconds, the men in black quickly subdued Jeff and his friends.

Lila was shocked. She stood up from the table and shouted, "Who the hell are you? I'm calling 911!"

Janet continued to eat her steak calmly. The steak here was pretty good; she had to give Lila that.

Ethan, who was wearing a dark brown windbreaker today, strode in. He sat next to Janet, took out a handkerchief, and handed it to her. "Honey, it's time to go."

Taking the handkerchief, Janet folded it neatly and wiped her lips. She glanced indifferently at the panic-stricken Lila and said, "Okay. Let's go, honey."

Lila and the others were all captured for interrogation.

"Please let me go, Brandon! I was just trying to apologize to Janet!" Inside the cold interrogation room, Lila was scared out of her wits and kept defending herself hysterically.

Jeff was also tied to a electric chair. He was so scared that he wet his pants. He tried to explain stiffly, "I... My friends and I were just curious to see what Janet White looked like. We never intended to hurt her!"

"So what were the ropes and sticks for?" Ethan's men didn't want to waste time listening to his measly excuses and flipped a switch. The chair sent bolts of electricity through Jeff's body.

Very quickly, the interrogation room was filled with screams.

Neither Jeff nor Lila had been tortured before. They confessed everything after only a short while.

In the room behind the steakhouse, Ethan's men found cameras and all kinds of aphrodisiac drugs. Obviously, they were meant for Janet.

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“They confessed. It’s all in this video. How do you want to do this?” Ethan slid the flash drive in front of Janet.

“I couldn’t care less about Jeff, but I know that my parents still care about Lila. I want to talk to them first.” Janet was hesitant. She didn’t think it was a good idea to put Lila behind bars without consulting her parents first.

Upon hearing this, Ethan’s expression darkened. He reached for Janet’s hand and said softly but firmly, “I respect that, but you shouldn’t be asking your parents for their opinion. You should just be informing them about what Lila has done. I’m not going to let her go this time, honey.”

Unlike Janet, Ethan wasn’t as indecisive.

He sent the video directly to the Whites.

When Johanna watched the video, she was furious. “I raised her for twenty years, but this is what I get in return? A criminal? How dare she do something like this?!”

Even Beal gave up on his former daughter completely. What she had done this time was simply too despicable for words.

He rubbed his temples and sighed, “Do whatever you want with her. She has to be punished. She is no longer a member of the White family. Whatever she has done has nothing to do with us.”

After Jeff and Lila were brought to court, they were sentenced to jail.

The Gillian family was poor, so they couldn’t hire a good lawyer for Lila and Jeff. And even if they did have the money, they had offended Brandon Larson. No lawyer in Barnes would be willing to take their case.

As if that wasn’t bad enough, the Gillian family’s small grocery store was in shambles. A group of thugs kept showing up at the store and made a scene, which forced them to shut down the business.

Glenn and Eva couldn’t get Jeff out of prison and had no means of livelihood in Barnes. Therefore, in despair and defeat, they left Barnes and returned to their village.

Unbeknownst to everyone, Charis had been living in Barnes this whole time. Even her parents thought that she was traveling abroad.

She hadn’t made any moves lately. After all, Ethan had almost found her out after the parachute incident. Luckily, she reacted quickly to get rid of Lila’s coach in time. Although the woman didn’t die in the end, she could never talk again as a vegetable.

Now, she knew she had to lie low. But lying low didn’t mean she couldn’t keep a close eye on Ethan’s and Janet’s movements.

What had unfolded recently was really interesting.

It never occurred to Charis that Lila would be expelled from the White family so soon. She had been the Whites’ daughter for over twenty years after all.

What surprised her more was that very soon after Lila joined the Gillian family, she conspired against Janet with her brother.

And now, Ethan had put the two siblings behind bars for good. Charis had no pawns left.

She had never thought that Lila would be this stupid. If she had continued to work with her, she might've gotten her own ass in trouble, too.

Jeff, on the other hand, had piqued Charis's interest. He looked like a reckless fool who would do anything for money.

Charis felt that she had found a new pawn. At first, she had had no hope for the Gillians, but now it seemed it was necessary for her to drop by Barnes' Prison.

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In Barnes' Prison.

There were a few people on the open-air training grounds. The prison guards each wielded an electric baton, and the sound of their leather boots stepping on the ground was particularly heavy. The prisoners were all dressed in orange jumpsuits. They would look at the dazzling sky, but the serious glares of the prison guards would soon force them to lower their heads.

Jeff's hair had been shaved to a buzz cut. A bulky man stood behind him, constantly rubbing his bald head with a smug smile. "This guy's head is like a pickled egg!"

Hearing this, the inmates around all burst into laughter. The bulky man gave a signal, and several inmates moved to block the sight of the prison guards, while others dragged Jeff into a cramped corner.

"Take off your pants!" A man with a tattoo of a scorpion on his face shoved Jeff to the corner and stepped on his bald head. "You should know what's good for you."

Of course this prison was full of criminals—some of which were gay.

Jeff's face fell in horror.

Even though he grew up in a poor family, Eva had always spoiled him. He couldn't even stand working in the laundry, let alone being bullied like this.

"Please don't do this. Please... Just let me go..." Jeff fell to his knees and burst into tears, snot running down his nose. He had never been humiliated like this in his whole life.

The prisoners turned a deaf ear to his pleas and began to take off their pants. Just then, a prison guard shouted in the distance, "Jeff Gillian? You have a visitor!"

Jeff bolted towards the visitation area as though his life depended on it. He thought that his parents had come to visit, so on his way there, he started to think of ways to force them to get him out.

However, when he saw the beautiful short-haired woman sitting on the opposite side of the glass, he was confused.

He picked up the phone and asked, "Who are you? Where're my parents?"

With a smile on her face, Charis spoke into the receiver in a casual tone. "I'm a... 'friend' of Janet's. I came here on her behalf to see how you were doing."

Jeff's expression instantly hardened and he was about to hang up the phone.

By now, he knew better than to mess with Janet and her husband.

"Wait, don't go so fast, you poor fool. Look at yourself. You've offended the Whites. Count yourself lucky they didn't take your life." With contempt in her eyes, Charis continued to jeer at Jeff.

"You fucking bitch! Say one more word and I'll skin you alive!" Jeff was so angry that his eyes turned red and he jumped up onto the table.

The prison guard next to him immediately subdued him. "Hey! Get down from there!"

Seeing this, Charis just smiled. "Janet has already asked someone to 'take good care' of you in this prison. You stupid idiot, you should really think about who you've offended. I doubt you'll make it out of here alive."

"Fuck you!" Jeff was so furious that he smashed the phone against the glass.

His hatred towards Janet and her husband had been festering for a while now. In his eyes, he had done nothing wrong yet the damned couple had abused their power and put him in jail.

Charis's goading made him even more furious.

Janet thought she could do whatever she wanted just because she was the daughter of the White family. These rich people could all go to hell!

Seeing that she had successfully pissed Jeff off, Charis put down the phone and left.

Jeff, on the other hand, was taken back to his cell because of his outburst just now.

After going back home, Charis moved on to the next step. She had secretly pulled some strings and spent a lot of money to get Jeff out of prison.

Jeff was accused of attempted blackmailing. Although Ethan had found the camera and the aphrodisiac he intended to use, Jeff refused to admit that they belonged to him and had shifted the blame to Lila.

This had made things much easier. Blackmailing was only a small crime and deserved only a light sentence.

Charis knew that the second Jeff got out of prison, she wouldn't have to lift a finger. Jeff would go after Janet himself.

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Ever since that woman's visit, Jeff had been living a life of fear every day.

Whenever he'd see those menacing men in the distance, he'd run away. Those men were all tall and strong; violating him would be a piece of cake for them.

And as the days passed, he hated Janet even more. What a vindictive woman! It was Lila who had asked her out to dinner. She should've taken revenge on her, and only her!

"Fuck that bitch! She should go to hell! Fuck!" Jeff cursed in a low voice.

However, an inmate overheard him. "Jeff Gillian! Who the fuck are you cursing? I think someone needs to be taught a lesson..."

Jeff was a short and thin man—the perfect type of many of the gay inmates, or just bullies.

Jeff shrank into the corner, too scared to breathe.

Just then, a prison guard strode into his cell and dragged him to his feet. "Jeff Gillian, pack up your things. You will be released next week."

"Are you sure it's me, Jeff Gillian? Not Jeff Willy or Jeff Smith?" Jeff was so shocked that he blurted these things without thinking.

He had been in prison for only two months. How could he get out so soon?

Clamping his hand over his mouth, he didn't dare to say another word. The joy of getting out quickly dispelled his doubts.

On the day he was released, no one came to pick him up. When he returned to the apartment where he and his parents had lived before, he heard from his neighbors that his parents had sold the

apartment and moved back to the countryside.

Ever since Jeff was put in jail, there had been a group of thugs coming to harass Glenn and Eva every day until they were forced to move.

Jeff threw a fit on the spot. He knew that damned bitch Janet was behind this!

With Eva and Glenn gone, Jeff had no money and no place to live. He could only turn to his friends.

However, when his friends saw him, they all avoided him as if he was a plague. "Jeff, leave us alone. The Whites have warned everyone in town that anyone who's close to you and your family will be their enemy, too."

Jeff was exasperated. He had nothing now. And it was all because of the fucking Whites and their fucking daughter.

"You fucking assholes!"

The more he thought about it, the angrier he became. Before he left, he begged his friends for one last favor, "If you see Janet White, call me. That bitch! I will beat the crap out of her!"

"Fine, fine." Jeff's friends were all thugs. Since Jeff wanted to take revenge on Janet, they were interested in seeing a good show. Anyway, they had nothing to lose.

Ever since Charis had managed to get Jeff out of prison, she had secretly kept an eye on him.

Somehow, he had gotten the address of the company Janet worked for. He had lurked outside W Marks Studio ever since, but he hadn't had a chance to make a move.

Charis couldn't wait any longer. That weekend, she tipped Jeff off through his street friends about Janet's whereabouts, who was out shopping with Elizabeth.

While Jeff did ask his friends to tell him if Janet ever showed up, he didn't expect the news to come so soon.

He had bought a bottle of concentrated sulfuric acid to permanently disfigure Janet's face and skin. Finally, the opportunity to strike came.

After finding out Janet's whereabouts, Jeff headed straight to the shopping mall with the bottle of sulfuric acid.

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Over the past couple of weeks, things hadn't been going too well for Janet. What Lila had done really left a mark on her.

Noticing that Janet looked a little frustrated, Elizabeth invited her to go shopping that weekend to get her mind off of things.

Elizabeth, who seldom even talked to others, suddenly invited her to hang out, so Janet found herself unable to refuse.

Compared with Seacisco, the malls in Barnes were more accessible and down to earth. On holidays and even weekends, there would be all kinds of interesting events held in the shopping malls.

As soon as they stepped inside the mall, Janet saw throngs of people bustling about.

Elizabeth was tall and fashionable, while Janet was incredibly pretty and petite. The two women with vastly different styles soon attracted people's attention.

Janet looked around in search of any store she'd be interested in. Suddenly, her eyes landed on a man with a sunken face among the crowd.

It was Jeff.

When did he get out of prison?

Before Janet could figure it out, she saw that Jeff was holding a bottle of pale yellow liquid. He glared at her with a ferocious look, like a wild beast eyeing its prey. "Bitch, go to hell!"

As he spoke, he pushed through the crowd and rushed at Janet. But before he could open the bottle of sulfuric acid, a group of men in black suddenly emerged and tackled him to the ground.

Seeing this, the crowd burst into an uproar and scattered like mice.

Amidst the chaos, the bottle of sulfuric acid was thrown to the ground and shattered. The liquid made a sizzling sound, steaming in the air and emitting a horrible smell.

“Who the fuck are you? Let go of me, you bastards!” Jeff’s head was forcibly pressed down to the ground by the men in black. He pounded the floor with his fists and craned his neck to glare at Janet with hatred.

Just then, a man in a grey tracksuit and a black baseball cap emerged from behind the men in black.

With his chin slightly raised, Ethan glanced at his men and said, “Take him away.”

Janet was still in a state of shock. She walked up to Ethan and asked doubtfully, “I thought Jeff was supposed to be in prison? How’d he get out so soon?”

“Some time ago, a prison guard informed me that he had been released in advance.” When Ethan found out about this, he too was confused.

It seemed that someone was taking action behind the scenes.

Ethan didn’t act on it until now because he knew that there had to be someone powerful behind the curtain. Besides, whoever was behind Jeff’s release was probably the same person who had orchestrated the parachute incident.

He hadn’t been able to find who this mastermind was, and now, he had the chance.

Thus, Ethan didn’t take any action but monitored Jeff in secret. As soon as Jeff was about to strike again, he caught him.

“Don’t worry, honey. You can continue shopping with your friend. The bodyguards will protect you.” Ethan’s expression softened as soon as he was with his wife. He touched Janet’s hair gently and then turned around to leave.

Still in a daze, Janet glanced at the bubbling yellow liquid on the ground with lingering fear.

In the interrogation room, Ethan sat down with his legs crossed, his face hidden under the brim of his cap.

His subordinate finished strapping Jeff to the electric chair.

Jeff roared hoarsely, “Let me go! Let! Me! Go!”

His voice and body were trembling.

“Enough with the bullshit. Who helped you get out of prison?” Ethan looked at his subordinate meaningfully, hinting at him to take action.

Jeff was no stranger to the horrors of this electric chair and was one again scared out of his wits. “I don’t know! When I was still in prison, only one person came to visit me. She said she was Janet’s friend and told me that Janet had hired someone to fuck me up in prison. That’s all, okay? I don’t know anything else. Please let me go!”

“I’ve asked the prison guard. No one has visited you.”

“Do you really think I’d lie right now? I’m telling you the truth!” Jeff insisted desperately.

Ethan frowned. "Okay, then what did the woman look like?"

"A brunette with shoulder-length hair and dressed in business attire. She looked beautiful, and more importantly, she looked rich. Oh, and there was a mole above her left eyebrow. That's all I can tell you."

Ethan fell silent.

Jeff's description pointed to one woman—Charis.

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Without saying anything more, Ethan stood up abruptly and left the interrogation room.

Now, he understood everything.

The pieces of the puzzle were coming together. If Charis was the mastermind behind everything that had happened, then everything made sense.

Back in Seacisco where everything started, the only family that was powerful enough to do all those things without leaving a trace was the Turners.

And the Turner family had some connections in Barnes as well. Although it couldn't compare to how many connections they had in Seacisco, money made the world go round. It wouldn't have been hard for Charis to clean up her trail.

Ethan had thought that Charis would stop after he warned her, but he was wrong.

He was ruthless to anyone who crossed the line, even if the culprit was his former classmate and partner.

When Ethan got home, Janet immediately stood up and approached him.

"Did Jeff say anything?" she asked anxiously. Her big, bright eyes were filled with worry.

After what had happened today, she lost her appetite for shopping. She absent-mindedly wandered around the mall with Elizabeth for a while and then went back home empty-handed.

"Yes. Somebody helped him get out of jail. It was Charis." Ethan shrugged off his coat and put his arm around Janet's shoulders. "I have to go back to Seacisco for a few days."

Janet frowned slightly. Hearing Charis's name, she couldn't say she was surprised.

"Does she really hate me that much?"

Charis had tried to destroy her relationship with Ethan, but she had already married Ethan and everyone knew it. It had been so long, Janet thought that Charis had given up on Ethan already.

"She was never fickle when it came to relationships, but even I never thought she'd do all these horrible things," Ethan said in a low voice.

The way she tackled her relationships was the same as how she tackled business—she'd do everything she had to just to achieve her goals.

“You know her well, don’t you?” Janet stuck out her lower lip, glancing at Ethan aggrievedly.

Then she stopped in her tracks and got frustrated at herself. She was already married to Ethan. Why was she jealous?

She took a deep breath and calmed herself down. “You two have known each other a long time. Will you let her go?”

“If she goes unpunished, she’ll only take it as encouragement to keep going further. You’ve been in danger so many times. First, the car accident. Then the kidnapping. Maybe she was behind all those. What’s terrible about all these is that she never has to get her own hands dirty. She uses others to do her dirty work and then they take the fall.” Ethan’s tone grew gloomy and his eyes darkened. “She has tried to hurt you too many times. I refuse to let her go so easily.”

Enveloped in Ethan’s arms, Janet felt the hairs on her neck stand on end.

There was no enmity between her and Charis, but Charis had tried to hurt her so many times just to get Ethan back.

Ethan packed some documents and flew back to Seacisco.

At the same time, he ordered his men in Barnes to investigate Jeff’s early release.

It turned out that he was right. Charis had pulled some strings and got Jeff out.

Charis had bribed someone working in the prison to delete the surveillance video of her visit there. Ethan reported it to the police and the police had their best technicians restore the video.

When the footage was restored, they were all sent to Ethan’s computer.

When Ethan’s private plane landed in Seacisco, he went straight to the Turner family with the evidence in tow.

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After baiting Jeff to the shopping mall, Charis asked her men to wait in the area.

If things went well, Jeff should be able to succeed.

But things didn’t go as planned. Less than an hour had passed when her subordinate called her to report that Jeff had been caught and taken away by Ethan and his men.

Upon hearing this, Charis’s heart leaped to her throat. She didn’t say anything and hung up directly. Without a second to lose, she immediately went back to her apartment in Barnes and began to pack up her things.

She had a bad feeling about this and couldn’t help but tremble in fear as she packed. Why was Ethan in the mall with his men?

When she was done packing, she immediately called her father. “Dad, I’m heading home. Has anything happened recently?”

Charis hadn't called Luke in a long time. Luke was happy to hear from his daughter and said in a cheerful tone, "Nothing much has happened while you were gone. You coming home already?"

"Yeah, I'll be back by today. Bye, Dad," Charis said with a smile, sighing with relief.

In the Turner family home in Seacisco, as soon as Charis stepped foot inside the house, she found that the atmosphere was depressing.

As usual, she tried joking with the servants. "What's going on today? You all look weird!"

The servants smiled awkwardly at her and then busied themselves with their work.

Shrugging it off, Charis turned towards the living room and instantly froze. She saw Ethan sitting on the sofa opposite to Luke, who had a long, gloomy face.

All the color drained from Charis's face. She turned around and was about to make a break for it, but was stopped by Ethan's men. "Miss Turner, please have a seat."

She didn't expect that Ethan would go to her father. Biting her lower lip, she sat down next to Luke.

Luke didn't look so good. Ethan had told him everything.

Ethan laid the evidence neatly on the table. His tone was calm, but his words packed a punch. "Miss Turner, you're much capable than I have known you to be."

With balled up fists, Charis didn't dare to look in Ethan's eyes. She wanted to defend herself, but she stopped on second thought.

She knew that she couldn't fool Ethan and making excuses for herself would do her no good.

"I... I don't know what you are talking about," Charis said as calmly as she could manage, lowering her head.

As she spoke, a single teardrop of desperation rolled down her cheek.

She now knew that she would never have a chance to be with Ethan.

Although she had expected that this might happen, she couldn't face it calmly.

Ethan had no feelings for her, and she knew this all along. But she couldn't bear for him to know about her vicious side.

Perhaps now, after knowing about everything she had done, Ethan could only see her as a vicious woman.

Ethan's sharp eyes seemed to pierce into her very soul. "Were you involved in all the incidents that put Janet's life in danger?"

Charis subconsciously shrank, as though all the strength had left her body. She smiled bitterly and said in a shaky voice, "Janet... Janet doesn't deserve you!"

She decided she had nothing to lose and bared her heart in front of Ethan.

She still believed that she had planned and handled everything perfectly. Ethan should've never found out it was her!

Ethan didn't say anything at first. He simply stood up and strode towards her ominously. All of a sudden, his hands shot out and grabbed Charis by the neck. His eyes were filled with an anger that Charis had never seen before. "Say that again, I dare you!"

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"Uh! Ah! Ethan—! Let go of me!" Charis tried to scream but it got stuck in her throat. Her face turned purple from the lack of oxygen. She struggled and kicked, crying "Dad! Help me! Dad?!"

Ethan was by no means a weak man. He could've snapped Charis's neck without breaking a sweat.

Frightened out of his wits, Luke stood up immediately to protect his daughter. "Mr. Larson, calm down! Let's talk about this!"

He tried his best to pull Ethan's arm away but in vain.

Catherine happened to come downstairs at this time. When she saw this scene, she was so frightened that she screamed.

Her usual elegant and easy-going manner vanished instantly. She rushed to help her daughter and shouted, "Brandon, do you know what you're doing?! You are not allowed to hurt my daughter in her own home!"

Ethan's eyes flashed dangerously. He tightened his grip around Charis's neck, which cut off Charis's access to oxygen completely.

Just when she thought she was going to die, Ethan suddenly threw her to the ground and let her go.

"Ahem!" Writhing on the ground, Charis covered her neck with her hands and coughed violently.

Regardless of her image, Catherine squatted on the ground and patted her daughter on the back anxiously. She glared at Ethan and roared, "Who do you think you are? Why'd you do that to Charis?"

Ethan removed the cuff links on his suit, rolled up his sleeves, and looked down at the two Turner women with a sneer. "Your daughter has tried to kill my wife on more than one occasion. I thought I went too easy on her just now."

Catherine glanced at Luke in shock. "What are you talking about? How could my daughter do such a thing?"

Catherine had her own career and didn't bother too much about her daughter's. She never had to worry about the capable Charis. All she knew was that Charis had left the Larson Group a while ago. She had thought that this was a good thing, because now Charis could take over the family business.

Both Catherine and Luke knew that Charis liked Brandon, but they didn't know what she had done in order to get him.

“Brandon, I’m warning you. Although Charis worked under you before, she doesn’t have to listen to you anymore. I can understand that there might be some problems between you two, but that doesn’t mean you can hurt my daughter!”

Ethan sneered. He gathered the evidence on the table and looked down at the coughing Charis, “Since you’re the daughter of the Turner family, I can’t hurt you in your own house. However, if you dare try to hurt my wife again, I will not let you go.”

Charis’s face was full of resentment. She gritted her teeth and glared at Ethan defiantly. “I didn’t do anything wrong. You can’t blame me for being a bit hot-headed!”

“Are you sure?” Ethan raised his eyebrows and asked in a bone-chillingly cold voice.

Looking into his eyes, Charis paused for a few seconds and suddenly burst into tears. “We’ve worked together for years, Ethan! Why don’t you have feelings for me? You fell in love with someone who came after me! Do you really think I’m not as good as her?”

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“Janet would never do the things you have done,” Ethan said, his voice void of emotion.

His indifference made Charis cry even harder.

She had never cried like this in her entire life.

Since the moment she started working with Ethan, she had never dared to show too much affection for him. She thought a man as mature and put-together as Ethan would probably like a woman who was also as decisive and restrained.

“I wouldn’t have done those things if Janet never showed up. You left me no choice! Ethan, do you really think you’re faultless? I’ve loved you all these years yet you turned a blind eye to it! You could’ve just told me that you had no feelings for me, but you always kept me guessing...”

Her voice broke as she spoke. Charis murmured softly, “How could I get you back if I just sat there and did nothing?”

“I thought not showing you any affection in return was clear enough of a message.” Ethan frowned. “I used to admire you as a capable business partner, but now I have nothing but disgust for you.”

After saying that, Ethan turned around to leave. He didn’t want to have anything to do with this despicable woman anymore.

When he passed by Luke and Catherine, he shot them a cold glance and warned, “Keep your daughter in line, or else she might end up in a miserable position.”

Then he left.

Catherine had understood what was going on. Heaving a long sigh, she helped up the crying Charis and shook her head. “You’ve always been a smart girl, Charis. How could your judgment get so muddied this time? And why are you so hung up on that man? There are plenty of other fish in the sea.”

Catherine first thought that the reason why Charis went to work in the Larson Group was that she liked Brandon. However, as the Larson Group developed, she started to believe Charis chose to stay there because she saw potential in the company, not because she liked Brandon.

As an experienced woman, Catherine knew that any woman who valued love more than her own career and even life would come to no good end.

Charis burst into tears. She shook her head and cried, “He’s the only man I’ve ever loved. I won’t be happy if I can’t have him. And if I can’t have him, neither can anyone else!”

Catherine sighed and shook her head helplessly.

Words of reason would do no help.

Charis had always been a stubborn girl. She would stop at nothing if she had set her mind to it.

“If that’s the way it’s going to be, then you have to at least protect yourself. You know how powerful Brandon is. If he really wants to hurt you, no one can stop him. I defended you earlier because I was afraid that he would hurt you. But if we really fought against the Larson Group, both sides would suffer great losses. Your father and I have worked hard all our lives for the Turner Group. Are you going to throw away our lives’ work just because you love that man?” Catherine sighed helplessly and handed her daughter a tissue.

She tried to talk some sense into her daughter, hoping the latter would see the light.

Charis still had a bright future ahead of her. It wasn’t worth it to ruin her life over a man.

What’s more, the way Brandon looked at her just now—his eyes were simply full of disgust. It was the stupidest thing in the world to try to win the heart of a man who hated you.

Charis fell silent and wiped away her tears. No one knew what she was thinking at that moment.