

The Mbahsb 571

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On the way back home from the cemetery, Janet could tell that Ethan's mind was elsewhere.

He seemed to be planning something elaborate. He leaned quietly against the car window, absentmindedly looking at the passing scenery.

As soon as they entered the house, they heard the phone in the living room ringing nonstop.

Ethan shrugged off his coat and trotted over to the telephone to answer it. He still didn't say anything, as if he was expecting the call.

After a while, it seemed that the person on the other end of the phone had finished speaking, and Ethan hung up, still without saying a word.

"Who was that? Why didn't you say anything?" Janet asked in confusion. "Wrong number?"

"Patrick's asking us to meet him in the Hancock Club in Barnes," Ethan said in a low voice, his expression darkening.

Janet approached him and held his arm comfortingly. "Do you want to see him?" she asked gently.

Ethan smiled coldly. "He came just in time. Of course I want to see him."

"Okay, we'll go see him then." With closed eyes, Janet reached for his hand and rubbed her cheek against it.

At the Hancock Club, Barnes.

The private room was decorated simply but it looked quite quaint. A delicate crystal chandelier hung on the ceiling, and smoke of the burning incense wafted in the air, mixed with the fragrance of tea.

However, no matter how comfortable the room was, it couldn't ease the tension in the air.

Patrick and Seth sat on one side, while Ethan and Janet sat on the other.

A silence fell over the room and nobody spoke for a long time.

Finally, Patrick broke the silence. He coughed and looked around cautiously. Then he looked at Seth unhappily and asked, "Where is Ritchie?"

"He has been quite hot-tempered lately, so I asked him to stay at home," Seth answered calmly.

Patrick didn't mind. After all, Ritchie would've ruined everything if he came.

He adjusted his mood and turned to look at Ethan sincerely. "I wanted to see you so that we could clear our past misunderstandings. I know that you've suffered at the hands of the Lester family ever since you were a child. But from now on, I promise you, nothing like that will ever happen again. I had no idea that Elissa killed your mother, but now that you've put her behind bars and I'm going to divorce her, everything should be cleared up. Are you going to reunite with the Lester family?"

Upon hearing this, Seth's eyes turned cold for a moment, but he soon regained his composure.

Ethan quietly looked into Patrick's eyes for a moment before bursting into laughter.

But his eyes were devoid of warmth, and there was indescribable disgust in his voice. "I'm impressed. How'd you manage to do that, Mr. Lester? You made it look as though you're not part of this."

Patrick's expression darkened. He slammed his fist on the table and roared, "What the hell's that supposed to mean?"

Ethan, on the other hand, unhurriedly took a sip of his tea. "Have you already forgotten all about it? Or are you that shameless that you could just dismiss your past crimes?"

Patrick narrowed his eyes at him. "Ethan, don't push your luck."

Ethan turned a deaf ear to him and continued in a bone-chillingly cold voice, "You raped my mother. In order to save yourself from a scandal, you told everyone that it was my mother who seduced you. And Elissa believed in your lie. That's why she killed her! You're the reason why all of this happened. You're just as guilty as Elissa!"

Instantly, all the color drained from Patrick's face and the confidence in his voice suddenly disappeared. "What... What do you want?" he stammered.

Ethan didn't answer right away and the room fell into dead silence.

It was clear to all that Ethan was in control. He smiled and said simply, "I want to bring the Lester family down, and I won't stop until you're behind bars with Elissa."

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"Say that again, I dare you!" Patrick roared, standing up from his chair. He pointed a trembling finger at Ethan and shouted, "I'm your father! How dare you talk to me like that!"

Before coming here, Patrick had thought that Ethan was satisfied now that he had put Elissa in jail. Little did he know that Ethan was coming for him next.

Ignoring Patrick's shouts, Ethan took Janet's hand and together, they left.

When Seth and Patrick were alone in the private room, Seth stood up and poured his father a cup of tea. With a gentle smile on his face, he said, "Don't worry, Dad. Ethan's not thinking straight. He'll come around after he calms down."

Patrick, on the other hand, was still seething with rage. He hadn't been threatened like this in a long time. He was so angry that, when Seth handed him the cup of tea, he threw it against the wall, smashing it to smithereens. "He should never have been allowed into the Lester family!"

Seth glanced at the shards of porcelain on the floor, and some of the tea even splashed onto his trousers. He plucked up a tissue, wiped the stains on his trousers, and sat back down calmly.

Today, he had seen Ethan's yet another side. He didn't expect him to be so bold.

Patrick had always been a strict father, and even Seth himself was a little afraid of him, but Ethan dared to challenge—and even threatened—Patrick.

But what surprised Seth the most was the fact that Patrick had invited Ethan back into the Lester family. This somehow made him want to compete with Ethan.

Ever since he was born, Seth had always been the most outstanding child in the Lester family. He had grown proud because of this. The fact that Patrick wanted to ask Ethan back to the Lester family upset him a little.

He had always been the excellent child, and now there was Ethan, founder of the Larson Group and respected by all in the business world. Ethan had exceeded him.

He had lost the lawsuit to Ethan, and now, Ethan had turned against the whole Lester family.

Narrowing his eyes, Seth took a sip of his tea without saying a word.

He would like to see the lengths Ethan would go to to bring the Lester family down.

It didn't take long for Janet to recover completely after being discharged from the hospital.

So she was back to work in no time.

"Janet, you should take more time off." Everyone had been trying to persuade her to rest some more.

Although she didn't suffer from a cardiac arrest because of working for too long, they still worried about her health.

"The project is almost finished. You should take more days off. We can handle it on our own," Elizabeth said to her.

But Janet was itching to get back to work. She whispered to Elizabeth reassuringly, "Don't worry. I won't work overtime anymore. Mr. Wesley won't allow it. Even if I wanted to, there are surveillance cameras here."

Happy to be back at work, the days passed by quickly. Soon, it was weekend.

Since Janet couldn't work overtime anymore, she decided to go shopping with Laney.

"I heard that Garrett hasn't been seeing anyone recently," Janet commented, fishing for any news about Garrett. As Laney's friend, she cared a lot about her love life.

At the mention of Garrett's name, Laney didn't know what to say. She averted her gaze and awkwardly scratched the back of her head. "Why're you telling me? I don't know him that well."

Janet glanced at her friend curiously, only to see that Laney's face had turned as red as a tomato.

"Excuse me!" Suddenly, a young man tried to squeeze past them in a hurry, bumping into Laney.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Did I hurt you just now, miss?" The man quickly caught Laney by the shoulder and looked at her with concern.

"No, I'm fine." Laney stood firm and was about to leave, but the young man suddenly stopped her.

Surprise was written all over the man's face. He pointed at her ear and cried, "You have those elf ears! Are you Laney Garcia?"

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Janet's eyebrows shot up in wonder and she looked at Laney's ears closely.

She hadn't noticed it before, but now that she looked at it, Laney's ears did look like that of an elf's.

Laney covered her ears and blushed. "Who are you? It's rude to shout, you know," she said with a frown.

It had been a long time since someone pointed out her elf ears.

The young man was grinning from ear to ear, baring his pearly whites. He raised his hand to part the short hair on his forehead and pointed at the nearly invisible scar above his eyebrows. "It's me, Greg! Greg Torres! Don't you remember me? We often fought when we were children. This is the 'souvenir' you gave me."

Staring at the scar, Laney gradually recalled the past. "Greg? You were so small and skinny back then, but now you're so tall that I didn't even recognize you! What brings you here?"

Laney's parents had died when she was still a child. She was often bullied back then, and she eventually learned how to fight back to defend herself. Fast forward to the present, she had turned her fighting skills into a career and became a hit woman.

Greg was one of the children who used to bully her. He was the one who started calling her "elf-ears", thanks to her elf-life ears.

Later, after learning how to fight, Laney beat up all the children who had bullied her, instilling fear in them. Since then, they stopped bullying her.

As for Greg, he had always been impressed with her ever since she had defeated him. In the end, they shook hands and became friends.

Later, Laney left her hometown and pursued a career as a personal bodyguard. She had never seen the kids from her childhood ever again.

Greg scratched the back of his head and smiled shyly. "Well, we were still kids when you left. I grew up. We both did."

With a playful smile, Laney punched him on the arm and nodded in approval. "Looks like you've been working out, Greg!"

Greg coughed violently because Laney did not pull her punch. Fortunately, he had enough muscle to cushion the blow somewhat.

He rubbed the sore spot on his arm and smiled, "And you're still as strong as before."

"I never stopped training. Let's spar sometime," Laney suggested confidently, raising her chin.

Fighting was what she did best.

Greg was stunned for a few seconds. Then he burst into laughter. "You haven't changed one bit! You've always loved to fight. Hey, how about we find a place to catch up? It's been years since we last saw each other."

Of course, Laney was interested. She looked at Janet and asked, "Janet, what do you say?"

"Fine by me. I happen to know a nice bar nearby. Let's go there."

In the bar, the three sat down to chat.

After ordering three pints of beer, Greg took a sip from his and studied Laney's face. Finally, he sighed wistfully. "Laney, you look exactly the same as you were before. You know what? When we were young, I thought you were so cool and really looked up to you. I heard that you've become one of the top-notch bodyguards now. Why am I not surprised?"

Laney just smiled. Hearing Greg retell the tales of their childhood, she felt nostalgic and sentimental. "It was really fun when we were kids. You boys were all taller and stronger than me at the time. I practiced hard every day so that I could beat your asses."

Greg shook his head helplessly and chuckled. He clinked glasses with Laney and the two caught up with each other happily.

It was already dark out by the time they stood up to part ways.

Before leaving, Greg handed his phone to Laney and said, "Can I have your number? I don't want to lose contact with you again."

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Laney smiled and put her number on Greg's phone.

Since then, Greg had been calling and texting her almost on a daily basis.

"I haven't been around much since I moved to Barnes. Do you know any scenic spots here? If you do, can you show me around some time? I'll pay you for your time!" The extroverted Greg was good at conversing. When speaking to him, one could always feel at ease.

Laney hadn't been in the city for long, so she answered him honestly. "I've only been here a month. I've never been anywhere except home and work."

After thinking for a while, Greg suddenly suggested, "Then let's get familiar with the city together. I can go with you everywhere."

Laney didn't find such a proposal strange. She viewed Greg as a friend, so she agreed readily. "Sure. My schedule's been pretty free lately anyway."

And so the two of them went and visited several famous tourist spots in Barnes.

It was a sunny day in April. Standing by the river, one could see the vast endlessness of the cloudless blue sky. As the summer breeze washed over them, the two felt really relaxed.

"Did you see those two stone lions at the gate of the museum? They looked just like the ones at the training grounds we used to go to. I remember that you used to like climbing on top of it and barking orders at us like a commander." It seemed that Greg really missed the good old days. Whenever he talked about the past, he'd wear a dreamy, wistful smile.

It was so long ago that Laney had forgotten all about it. "Are they still there? I haven't been back in so long!"

With a sad smile, Greg shook his head. "I haven't been back either. I moved away after high school. We can go back sometime if you want."

"I'll think about it." It was just a small talk, and Laney currently had no plans to go back and visit her childhood home.

After sharing several meals, Greg and Laney quickly became close.

Although sometimes they only met once a week or so, every time they met, Greg would bring her a gift. "Check this out—it's from Singapore."

Laney would accept his gifts and thank him. She asked curiously, "I called you two days ago, but no one answered the phone. Were you busy?"

When Greg got busy, Laney often couldn't get through to him.

"I'm sorry I missed your call. Business has been hectic lately. I need to meet clients from all over the world, so I often go on business trips," Greg explained apologetically. "But since you've brought it up, I won't turn off my phone again from now on."

The reason why Laney asked this question was out of curiosity, not out of anger or frustration. Hearing Greg's resolution, she felt a bit at a loss. "No, no. You don't have to do that for me. I was just asking."

"Relax. I just don't want to miss any of your calls. You don't know how happy I was when I heard that you were looking for me," Greg said, smiling at her dotingly.

Laney smiled awkwardly and averted her gaze. Damn it! Greg must've misunderstood her.

Ever since that fateful meeting, Greg had been coming at Laney. He kept asking her out for dinners and movies.

"I like you and want to see you more often. If you don't feel comfortable, just tell me and I'll stop. If not, I will keep doing this until you start to like me back," Greg said frankly.

Laney was stunned. As no one had ever pursued her like this, the straight confession of his love caught her completely off guard.

She didn't have many friends. The only one she could talk to about this was Janet.

When Janet heard about it, she was also taken aback. She didn't expect that Greg, whom she had only met once, would chase after Laney so soon.

"Well, what do you think of him?"

"I don't find him annoying, but I'm not sure if I like him or not. To me, he's still my childhood playmate. I don't know if I should start a relationship with him," Laney told her friend, sticking out her lower lip.

"If you aren't sure whether you like him or not, don't accept him just because he likes you. Otherwise, you might regret it someday," Janet advised.

Somehow, Garrett caught wind that Greg had been pursuing Laney. One day, he waited at the door of her apartment for a long time until she finally came back.

"What took you so long? Were you on a date?" Garrett asked unhappily.

Ignoring him, Laney said flatly, "It's none of your business." Then she headed towards the door.

"I'm just telling you to be careful. That man might be onto something," Garrett shouted after her. "You don't know much about him. You can't just trust him."

Laney stopped in her tracks to glare at Garrett. "You have no right to say that about my friend!"

After saying that, she turned around and proceeded to unlock her door. With her back to Garrett, she couldn't help but smile faintly.

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Laney didn't reciprocate Greg's feelings; instead, she gradually put some distance between them. At some point, she simply refused all his invitations.

Greg seemed to realize that this was her way of rejecting him, so he stopped coming at her.

Laney thought this matter was finally over.

However, a few days later, on a stormy night, Laney suddenly received a call. It was from Greg.

She could hear the sound of the rain in the background, and Greg sounded weak. "Laney, I want to see you. Please."

Laney sat up in bed and asked, "Where are you?"

She had heard the sound of a car from both her phone and outside her window. She immediately got up from bed, trotted over to the window, and looked down.

Sure enough, standing in front of her apartment building with an umbrella was none other than Greg himself.

Laney quickly put on a coat and rushed to him. "Do you think you're in a movie? Stop being so dramatic. Even if you get sick from standing here all night, I won't feel sorry for you!"

Greg staggered towards her, and he looked listless, unlike before. "I just wanted to see you. I drank a lot of beer today, and all I could think about is you."

Laney gritted her teeth and said firmly, "Greg, I don't like you that way. I only think of you as a friend."

Greg ran his fingers through his wet hair and murmured, "So, you don't hate me? Are you saying I just need to try harder?"

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The thought seemed to excite him. He quickly handed the umbrella to her and cried, "Then I'll try harder, Laney!"

With a big smile on his face, he rushed back to his car and drove away.

Laney was at a loss for words. She could only sigh heavily and went back to her apartment with his umbrella.

Ever since she moved into her new apartment, she hadn't bought any home goods. It just so happened that she had almost run out of food, so after getting off work one evening, she decided to go to the supermarket.

There seemed to be a sale today, because the supermarket was crowded with people. Amidst the crowd, Laney saw Garrett and a beautiful girl beside him.

It only took one look at the girl for Laney to realize that she was Garrett's type.

"You should eat more vegetables. I know you work overtime a lot, so you need healthier food." The girl held a bundle of leafy greens in front of Garrett.

"You know I don't have time to cook. I'm just here to buy some vitamins," Garrett said gently.

Laney rolled her eyes and sneered. She somehow felt cheated.

Just when she was beginning to think that Garrett had really changed, she was wrong. He was just trying to fool everyone.

Laney left the supermarket with nothing but anger.

She was inexplicably annoyed. Just a few days ago, Garrett tried talking her out of getting into a relationship with someone else. Yet here he was now, dating another girl himself.

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It was Greg.

When Greg saw her, he quickly sprinted across the road. With a bunch of flowers in one hand and a bag of groceries in the other, he said sheepishly, "I bought you some food. I thought that you've been so busy, you might not have the time to get some groceries. And while I was at the supermarket, I saw these tulips. I noticed you usually wear floral patterns, so I figured you might like these."

Laney had been feeling angry, but now, her anger slowly dissipated. Perhaps it was because she had just been hurt that even the slightest gesture of care from someone would make her feel warm.

"Why'd you get me all these things?"

Greg scratched the back of his head and said awkwardly, "Because I like you."

Overhearing this, the passers-by gathered around them and started to encourage Laney. "Miss, this young man has been waiting here for over an hour. He really cares about you."

Laney looked up into Greg's hopeful eyes and thought about the smile on Garrett's face when he was with that girl just now.

Without thinking, she blurted, "I am willing to give us a try."

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It was Laney's first time to be in a relationship, and Greg definitely took the lead, while she passively catered to his requests. Perhaps it was because she didn't really have romantic feelings for Greg that she didn't find it as sweet as it should have been.

One weekend, Greg invited her to a popular cafe.

Greg happily ordered some delicious-looking brownies and colorful macaroons.

Laney liked healthy foods with low sugar content over sweets, so she only took a few bites out of politeness.

Greg, on the other hand, seemed to be quite the sweet tooth. He enthusiastically snapped some photos of the Instagram-worthy desserts before munching on them.

While Greg ate, Laney absentmindedly looked out the window and watched as couples passed by, hand in hand. They all seemed very happy together.

It wasn't until Greg waved his hand in front of her that she came to her senses.

"Laney, there's something I wanted to ask. How about I move in with you? I mean, I just think it'd be wonderful to come home to you after work," Greg suddenly suggested.

"Okay," Laney answered flatly. Since they were in a relationship now, she didn't find it too big of a deal to start living in together. It was Laney's first time to be in a relationship, and Greg definitely took the lead, while she passively cetered to his requests. Perhaps it was because she didn't really have romantic feelings for Greg that she didn't find it as sweet as it should have been.

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The following day, Greg moved his stuff to her place.

Greg was a good boyfriend in all aspects, but sometimes, Laney couldn't help but feel that he was too clingy. He would follow her everywhere and even accompany her to work. She couldn't catch a break.

"Don't you need to go to work?" Laney looked at Greg, who was following her to work, with a hint of impatience.

Greg scratched his head awkwardly. "I'll go to work after I drop you off. Don't worry about me. I work flexible hours."

Laney crossed her arms over her chest and narrowed her eyes at him. She had noticed that Greg seemed to be observing something just now.

Ever since he moved in, he had never done anything that would make her feel uncomfortable. As a result, they didn't look like a couple at all. The most intimate thing they had ever done so far was to hold hands.

Greg had told her that he had a business, but Laney didn't think he looked like a businessman. He had always been wary of his surroundings everywhere they went.

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Greg broke into a wide grin. "Cars. We were crossing the road just now." Then he reached out and stroked her hair gently. "You seem suspicious of me. I'm your boyfriend. Don't you trust me?"

A few days later, Laney was watching a movie with Greg at home when they suddenly heard a knock on the door.

"Have you ordered takeout?" Laney asked, standing up to open the door. "No? Who would visit us at this time then?"

However, as soon as the door was opened, a group of armed men rushed in.

"What the hell are you doing?" Laney was on guard in an instant.

"Where is that bastard? Fuck! Greg's been hiding in a woman's house?!" One of the men said loudly, "Greg has offended our boss and we've been ordered to take him out!"

Greg was so frightened that he threw the remote control in his hand away and hid behind Laney, shouting, "Laney, you have to protect me!"

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Laney instantly knew that something was off, but she didn't have the time to figure it out.

"This is my home. No matter what kind of feud you have—solve it somewhere else." Laney clenched her fists and spoke clearly and concisely.

"Cut the crap, bitch! Greg's your boyfriend, so what?" To his peers, he barked, "Get him!" In the blink of an eye, the rest of the thugs surged forward.

Laney and Greg were outnumbered. Worse yet, those men were armed. She couldn't defeat them all by herself. Moreover, with Greg hiding behind her, she couldn't make a run for it.

She grabbed Greg's collar and yanked him towards the French window in the living room.

The men closed in on them. To buy some time, Laney picked up a chair and hurled it at them. She shouted at Greg, "Jump out the window! I'll cover you!"

Greg craned his neck and looked out the window. Instantly, his face turned pale.

They were on the third floor. Although the ground below was covered in grass, there was still a possibility he'd die if he jumped.

"I—I can't! We're too high!" Greg's voice was shaky.

Laney was busy fighting off these strong men with her bare hands, but she knew she wasn't going to last. "I'm going to jump without you. If they kill you, I'm not coming back to identify your corpse!" Laney instantly knew that something was off, but she didn't have the time to figure it out.

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Greg was still hesitating when Laney gritted her teeth and pushed him from behind. "Why are you just standing there?!"

Greg let out an ear-piercing scream as the two jumped out of the window together.

They landed on the lawn and rolled. The fall seemed to have knocked all the air out of Greg, because he lay on the grass, unmoving. It wasn't until Laney yanked him to his feet that he was able to stand.

"Run! It's only a matter of time before those men catch up!" Laney was sweating profusely from the fight, but she didn't have the time to care. She grabbed Greg by the arm and ran.

Soon, the men caught up to them, cornering them in an alley.

Laney had no choice but to fight. She gritted her teeth and started attacking the men.

The men weren't just ordinary thugs. They obviously had formal training before. Fortunately, Laney was a skilled fighter. In a few minutes, she managed to knock down three men. But soon, she was backed into a corner.

She glanced at Greg, who was behind her. She wanted to ask him for help. Perhaps together, the two of them would stand a chance.

However, what she saw rendered her speechless. Greg was cowering behind her, shaking like a leaf.

Laney's heart sank. She knew she couldn't count on him.

Just as she was about to lose hope, a voice sounded from the entrance to the alley.

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"A group of men bullying a lone woman. Oh, the humanity!"

Standing at the entrance of the alley with a baseball bat on his shoulder, Garrett clicked his tongue in disappointment. He had taken off his glasses and looked a lot less gentle than usual.

"So this is your knight in shining armor?" The men all looked at Garrett and burst into laughter. Then they rushed towards him.

Laney was shocked. She shouted at him anxiously, "What the hell are you doing here? They will kill you!"

"I'm here for you!" Swinging the baseball bat in his hand, Garrett fought the men off. Laney joined in the fight, and soon, they stood back to back. "Don't worry. I've called reinforcements!" Garrett shouted to her amidst the hubbub.

Garrett had tried to call Laney after finding out that Greg had moved into her apartment, but nobody answered his call. Worried, he went to check on her and saw these men attacking her.

Before getting out of his car, he had called his men over.

Garrett tried to fight off these thugs to the best of his abilities, but they were trained fighters after all. One man managed to land a blow directly on his back during the fight.

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Garrett couldn't help but cry out in pain.

Upon hearing this, Laney's face turned pale with fright. "You're not a trained fighter! Get out of here while you still can!"

Garrett spat out a mouthful of blood and glanced at Greg behind him. Then he asked Laney, "Really? You want me to hide behind you like that wuss?"

But Garrett didn't have the time to keep mocking Greg. The situation was getting more and more critical. Laney was out of breath after several rounds of fighting. She knew she wouldn't be able to last much longer.

At that moment, she could see blood stains on Garrett's wrinkled shirt as he stood firm in front of her.

Stunned for a few seconds, Laney gritted her teeth and struggled to stand up again. However, before she could rush into the fight, Garrett put his hand on her shoulder and said gently, "Get behind me."

"What?" Laney looked up at him in disbelief. However, Garrett was standing against the light, so she couldn't see his face clearly.

"Stay back. I'll handle things from here." Garrett pushed her back. Then, swinging the baseball bat wildly, he rushed towards the men in front of them. Garrett couldn't help but cry out in pain.

Upon hearing this, Laney's face turned pale with fright. "You're not a trained fighter! Get out of here while you still can!"

Garrett spat out a mouthful of blood and glanced at Greg behind him. Then he asked Laney, "Really? You want me to hide behind you like that wuss?"

But Garrett didn't have the time to keep mocking Greg. The situation was getting more and more critical. Laney was out of breath after several rounds of fighting. She knew she wouldn't be able to last much longer.

At that moment, she could see blood stains on Garrett's wrinkled shirt as he stood firm in front of her.

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Just then, the sound of a revving engine suddenly came from the entrance to the alley. A refitted truck stormed in, and dozens of men immediately got out. "Mr. Harding!"

Instantly, the thugs' faces fell.

Before they could make a run for it, Garrett's men swarmed in and started beating up the thugs. Knowing they were outmatched, the thugs quickly scrambled.

Seeing that they were safe now, Laney immediately went to support Garrett, who looked like he was about to collapse. "I'm taking you to the hospital."

"No need. I'm fine. Let's deal with your problem first," Garrett said calmly, wincing slightly in pain.

Then, he turned to look at the man that was still hiding in the corner. Greg was so scared that his legs were shaking and he couldn't stand up.

Garrett walked over and pointed at him with the baseball bat, blood dripping from the tip. "You knew that someone was hunting you yet you asked to stay at Laney's place. Why?"

Greg was too shell-shocked to say a word.

Seeing this, Garrett pointed at the guards behind him and said, "If you don't start talking, you'll end up like the men who came after you just now."

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"No! Okay, okay! I'll tell you everything!" Greg fell to his knees and started babbling, "I borrowed money from them last year but I couldn't pay it back in time. The loan sharks have been chasing after me for a whole year, and I have nowhere to hide. Coincidentally, I ran into Laney in the street. Laney was always a good fighter. Moreover, I heard that she's a professional bodyguard now, so... So I thought that if she became my girlfriend, she could protect me from those men."

Garrett was speechless. He poked Greg's head with the baseball bat and said with disdain, "You are such a coward! You expected a woman to protect you?"

Laney was also stunned. She shrugged and said, "No wonder."

She hadn't felt anything when she was dating Greg, and Greg had never asked for anything from her except to hold hands occasionally.

Somehow, now that she knew Greg's real intentions, she felt relieved.

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Garrett pointed squarely at Greg's nose, filled with loathing, and said, "What a wuss! When Laney was with me, I wanted to do everything for her. And you had the gall to expect her to protect you? You could have hired a bodyguard, but no, instead, you thought, maybe you should find a girlfriend who could protect you for no cost so you could save a few bucks?"

Laney stood beside Garrett listening to him berate Greg. A satisfied smile stretched across her face.

Garrett couldn't calm himself down even one iota. He turned around and stared at Laney. After a while, he asked in utter disbelief, "So is this your type of man?"

Laney immediately stopped smiling and said in a frigid tone, "No."

Garrett couldn't bring himself to believe it. He looked at Greg, who was still trembling in the corner, and didn't know how Laney could ever rather be with such a coward than him, a handsome and rich man who loved her truly and deeply. At least, he would never hide behind Laney when they were caught in danger.

"Then why were you with him?" Garrett fixed his eyes on Laney. Garrett pointed squarely at Greg's nose, filled with loathing, and said, "What a wuss! When Laney was with me, I wanted to do everything

for her. And you had the gall to expect her to protect you? You could have hired a bodyguard, but no, instead, you thought, maybe you should find a girlfriend who could protect you for no cost so you could save a few bucks?"

Leney stood beside Garrett listening to him berate Greg. A satisfied smile stretched across her face.

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Garrett couldn't bring himself to believe it. He looked at Greg, who was still trembling in the corner, and didn't know how Leney could ever prefer to be with such a coward then him, a handsome and rich man who loved her truly and deeply. At least, he would never hide behind Leney when they were caught in danger.

"Then why were you with him?" Garrett fixed his eyes on Leney.

She was simply mortified. She scratched her nose awkwardly and stuttered, "I... I..."

She hesitated in providing him with an answer because she thought it was an immature reason to reveal to Garrett. Her juvenile reasoning for agreeing to be Greg's girlfriend was simply because she had been angry with Garrett.

She avoided the question and said in deflection, "Don't yell at me here. It's none of your business."

After saying that, she turned on her heel and left.

Garrett knew that there must be a reason behind her agreement to date Greg. He caught up with her, grabbed her wrist and asked, "When did you become his girlfriend? If I hadn't overheard Janet's words, would I have known about this at all?"

Leney shook off his hand and said, "We just started dating four days ago. Can you stop pestering me about this?"

After thinking for a while about what had happened four days ago, he asked, "Where had you been four days ago? What happened?"

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"Alright then, it's none of my business. If you don't tell me, I'll find it out myself."

As soon as Garrett finished speaking, he was about to leave.

Leney could do nothing about it. She knew that if he was determined to investigate the whole thing, he would definitely find something.

In that case, she thought she'd better tell him herself.

Laney then stopped him. "Fine! I will tell you the truth! I was at the supermarket the other day and saw you with your new girlfriend. On the same day, he came to me and asked me to be his girlfriend. I wasn't thinking clearly, so I agreed. That's it. Don't investigate the matter."

After listening to her words, Garrett was momentarily stunned before understanding dawned upon him.

He touched his jaw, lowered his head and looked at her. He couldn't help smiling. "Did you agree to be his girlfriend to get back at me? Because you were jealous?"

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Laney couldn't hide it anymore. She raised her head and blurted, "Yes! Laugh at me if you want! You've been in countless relationships; why couldn't I? Now that you know the truth, you must feel really good about yourself, right?"

After baring her heart, Laney turned around and started to walk away.

She should never have trusted this playboy!

Garrett was stunned for a few seconds. Then, he broke into a goofy grin. He had finally gotten this tough woman to fall in love with him!

He trotted to catch up to Laney and said sincerely, "I'm serious about you, Laney. This isn't a game to me."

"'Serious'? Serious enough to date another woman while waiting for me to come around? I'm sorry, but that doesn't sound very serious to me." Laney glanced at him and sneered.

With a slight frown, Garrett walked in front of her to block her way. "That woman you saw—she isn't my girlfriend, silly. She's my cousin. We've been close ever since we were kids. The day you saw us in the supermarket, she had come to visit me and found out that I had nothing in the fridge, so we went to buy some groceries. I had no idea you'd see us there."

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the supermarket, she had come to visit me and found out that I had nothing in the fridge, so we went to buy some groceries. I had no idea you'd see us there."

Hearing this, Laney stopped in her tracks.

For some reason, she felt as though a weight had been lifted off of her shoulders.

Nonetheless, she still wanted to leave, but Garrett refused to step out of her way.

"Where do you want to go? Since I've made myself clear, you should give me an answer." Garrett coughed awkwardly and then asked with one brow raised, "Were you jealous?"

Only in that moment did Laney realize that she actually had feelings for Garrett. Her face turned as red as a tomato and she quickly took a few steps back to put some distance between them.

But her reaction already betrayed her feelings. Seeing this, Garrett was overjoyed.

He had always thought that he didn't have a chance with Laney, but now, he was so glad to have been wrong.

Laney didn't say anything, and Garrett didn't force her.

"Of course, you can be in a relationship with anyone, but not that loser," Garrett continued in a gentle voice. "So how about being in a relationship with me?"

"Not a chance," Laney answered without skipping a beat.

Her response was like pouring a bucket of cold water over Garrett. She didn't even give it a thought! Was he that unattractive in her eyes?

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Laney pursed her lips and eyed him warily. "If we were to get into a relationship, would you be doing it out of fun or would you want it to last?"

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Laney pursed her lips and eyed him warily. "If we were to get into a relationship, would you be doing it out of fun or would you want it to last?"

"I don't want to just have fun with you, Laney. I know it sounds weird, because you're really not my type. But my feelings for you are real—I've never felt this way about the other girls I've dated before." Garrett looked into Laney's eyes sincerely and spoke in a serious tone. He added softly, "I want to protect you. I want you to be by my side for the rest of our days. I don't care what the cost is. I want this to last long—no, I want this to last forever."

Garrett had never considered getting married before. But now, looking at the tough woman in front of him, his heart softened.

Laney looked up at him for a long time and finally sighed. "That's the problem. If you want to settle down, you should be with someone who's from the same social status as you. We are worlds apart, Garrett. You should marry a lady from a rich family, not someone like me."