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The relationship between Juana and Joy had become much closer because they knew that their children were in a hidden “boyfriend–girlfriend” relationship.

Juana was absent–minded while sitting in the living room at home taking care of Ruby. Lost in thought, she decided to call Joy. In the morning, she heard from the maid that Michael had passed away and that Joy’s niece was injured and hospitalized. She thought Joy must be feeling uncomfortable with all these unfortunate events.

Joy had a carefree personality and would definitely not like to interact with those pretentious wealthy wives. She would not reveal her thoughts to them either.

Even if she did, they would only make fun of her. There were only a few people who would genuinely comfort and care for her, and not making fun of her was already good enough.

She picked up her phone and quickly made a call to Joy. The call was answered promptly. “Hello, Joy. How are you?”

Joy, who had just been comforted by her husband, heard the comforting words from Juana and burst into tears again. She sniffled softly. “It’s so warm of you to call me. I’m fine, but I can’t get over the fact that my brother passed away at such a young age. And I don’t know who is seeking revenge on my niece. Our family has been going through a lot.”

Juana was not highly educated and did not know how to comfort others with profound words. She usually randomly

chatted with Sherri and could not come up with any profound theories. “I’ll come to see you now. Just give me your address so that you won’t be thinking randomly and come up with any bad thoughts.”

When Joy heard that Juana wanted to come and see her, she was deeply touched. To have such a warm–hearted friend during her moments of sadness definitely touched her heart. She immediately said, “Bring Ruby with you. This child can melt anyone’s heart. It’s been a few days since I’ve seen her, and I miss her a little.

“Alright, I’ll bring her along.” Juana thought that Joy was also alone at home, so she was afraid that she might become depressed. She did not hesitate and immediately packed Ruby’s backpack. “Ruby, Grandma wants to take you out to play. Let’s go meet Grandma Joy, okay?”

The little one started picking up toys and stuffing them into her small backpack. Seeing this, Juana smiled and asked, “Do you want to bring this too?” It was a small bunny doll.

The little one nodded. “Yes.”

“Alright, then let’s bring the little bunny with us. Let’s go! The butler will arrange a driver.” After saying that, Juana held Ruby’s hand and walked towards the door.

After about an hour, they arrived at the shared location provided by Joy. Juana held Ruby in her arms, and the driver, who was sensible enough, got off and opened the door. “Madam, I’ll wait here.

“Okay.” Juana stood at the entrance of the residential area with Ruby in her arms. The location given by Joy was a villa area called Tranquil Lux. The standalone villas were imposing, clearly belonging to wealthy people.

Juana knew that the Blackwell family was involved in real estate, but seeing this villa area with her own eyes still made her marvel. Joy did not have the attitude of those wealthy wives she had encountered before. That was also why they got along well.

As soon as she walked through the entrance, a security guard came to greet her, with both hands placed in front. “Excuse me, are you Mrs. Landor?”

Juana nodded.

The security guard said respectfully, “Mrs. Landor, please come in. Mrs. Blackwell has already made arrangements for you to drive in directly.”

Juana asked, “How many more minutes do I need to walk?”

The security guard said with a smile, “Another 5 to 6 minutes will do.”

After thinking for a moment, Juana said to the driver. “You drive in I’ll take Ruby for a stroll. She also wanted to get familiar with the place, so that next time she could drive in directly.

Besides, what if her daughter and Hackett truly became a married couple? With that thought in mind, Juana started walking with Ruby in her arms. The driver was taken by another security guard to the villa of the Blackwell family, while Juana was led towards the villa

“Birds of a feather flock together.” This was how the security guard felt about Juana’s attitude. Mrs. Blackwell was humble and easy-going, and it turned out that the Landor family was also a big family that was easy to get along with. They were really different from some other wealthy wives, which made it hard for people to see them as wealthy. Indeed, the wealthier the person, the more low-key they tended to be

In no time, they arrived at the villa where Joy was Juana thanked the security guard and then pressed the doorbell with Ruby in her arms.

When the door opened, Joy’s swollen red eyes confirmed Juana’s guess. “I knew you were crying at home. Come, let Ruby

cheer you up.

As expected. Joy saw Ruby and could not help but smile. “Come in quickly. I hope I did not scare Ruby.”

Juana lowered her head to change her shoes and said, “What do you think? Your eyes were all swollen like cherries.”

After putting on her shoes and raising her head, she saw a middle-aged man sitting on the couch in a black suit, reading a magazine. Looking closely, his facial features and contours were quite similar to Hackett’s. It seemed that he was quite handsome when he was young. No wonder he could have such a handsome son as Hackett. Juana felt a bit embarrassed now. Why didn’t she ask if Joy was alone at home before coming?

Nathan noticed the awkward atmosphere and nodded slightly to greet her. "Hello, Mrs. Landor."

Juana, feeling embarrassed, hurriedly greeted back. "Hello."

Afraid that Juana would feel embarrassed, Joy turned to her husband and said, "If you have nothing else to do, go to the company. I have Mrs. Landor to keep me company."

Her words were clearly a way to dismiss him. Nathan would not fail to notice it. He got up, closed the magazine, and put it on the couch.

Nathan felt that he was a little redundant. With the two women chatting, he could not sit still any longer. "Well, then I'll go to the company."

Suddenly, Ruby shouted, "Goodbye, Grandpa."

Joy was instantly delighted by her cuteness. "You have such sharp eyes, and you really have a way with words, young lady. I wonder who you took after. No adult would not like this child."

Nathan walked up to Ruby and squatted down. He did not say that he was not her grandfather. Instead, he replied kindly, "Hello, young lady."

When he saw Ruby's facial features clearly, a complex and intriguing emotion flashed in Nathan's eyes. His eyebrows, which were originally relaxed, slightly furrowed, but he gently rubbed Ruby's hair.

Nathan stood up, nodded slightly to Juana again, and then walked out of the villa with brisk steps. As soon as he got into the driver's seat, he called his son. "Are you at the company?"

Hackett honestly replied, "Yes, I am. Didn't I tell you not to come? You should stay home with Mom. Aren't you afraid she might kill herself with her fragile mind?"

Nathan said, "Your mom is not that fragile. Stay at the company. I have something to ask you. Your mom has a friend. Keeping her company at home."

Hackett, curious about his mother's picky nature when it came to friends, wondered when she made friends he did not know about. "Who?"

Nathan said directly, "You don't know her."

Well, it was his mother's freedom to make friends. If she could enter the Blackwell family's villa, then his father should also be aware of it, otherwise, he would not have let the friend into the house that easily. Thinking of this, Hackett did not ask any further.

Half an hour later, Nathan walked into Hackett's office at a fast pace. He had just sat down on the couch when he went straight to the point and asked, "It is about your past girlfriend. Is there any possibility that she gave birth to your child?"

Hackett was dumbfounded by the sudden question. What was going on recently? Why were both his parents asking him about this? "Dad, I haven't really had a girlfriend. Those were just targets to resist Mom's arranged dates."

Nathan, not avoiding a direct conversation with his son as a man, asked, "Have you had any chance that you slept with a girl without having protection?"

This question triggered memories in Hackett's mind. He thought for a moment and realized that during that time with Sherri, he was too excited and might not have used protection. But that woman must have taken the pill.

Nathan noticed the change in his son's emotions and had already formed some guesses in his mind. He decided right away. "Think of a way to do a paternity test on the child Mrs. Landor brought along. You don't need to stay at the company anymore. Take care of this matter first. Now hurry home."

It wasn't that Nathan had become overly suspicious, but the child's facial features were almost the same as Hackett's when he was young. It was hard not to have doubts.

Hackett could no longer remain calm. "Who are you talking about? Whose child is it?"

Nathan said with dissatisfaction, "Don't you know who you slept with? Aren't you clear about it in your heart?"

Hackett was shocked, his expression changing unpredictably. Considering Edward had not married yet, if the child was from the Landor family, could it be Sherri's? Since if the child was Edward's, his father would not have asked him to do a paternity test simply by looking at the child.

His mind was filled with countless thoughts, and it felt like his heart was stuck in his throat. "Is that child in our home?"

Nathan did not stop him but reminded him. "Yeah, don't approach this openly. It's not 100% certain that it's yours."

"Go talk to Frank to help me find out whose child it is. If it was Sherri's child, did it mean there was no need to do the best amputation?" It was possible that she could not stand the loneliness overseas.

Hackett desperately looked for an excuse to absolve himself, conflicted in his inner thoughts.

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After leaving the Blackwell Group, Hackett headed straight home, driving much faster than usual. He really wanted to see how much the child his father mentioned resembled him.

The usual 40-minute journey was completed in about 20 minutes. He casually parked the car in front of the yard, the vehicle askew, and quickly got out.

With a click, he opened the door and saw Sherri's mother chatting warmly with his own mother on the couch. His mother no longer showed any signs of sadness.

Joy was puzzled. Wasn't her son supposed to be at the company? She asked, "Weren't you at the company? Why did you come back now? And where's your father?"

Hackett did not answer. His gaze was fixed on the little girl playing by the side of the couch. The girl was wearing a princess dress, with two braids tied up and a pink butterfly hair clip on her head.

Hackett's gaze was fixed on her face, but he could not see any resemblance to himself. How could anyone see any resemblance? Besides, he did not even know what he looked like as a child.

He thought to himself that perhaps his father was making a big fuss over nothing. But since his own father insisted on a paternity test, he had to do it. He would show the results to his parents later to prove that they were wasting their time trying to find an illegitimate child for him day after day.

Joy noticed her son's gaze and followed his line of sight. She realized he was looking at Ruby and explained with a smile. "Don't you think this little girl is cute? If you think she is, then put in some effort. Don't let me wait for long"

Hackett snapped back to reality and walked briskly towards the couch. He politely greeted Juana. "Hello, Mrs. Landor. Who is this child?"

As soon as Juana saw Hackett, she liked him. He was handsome, perfectly in line with her expectation of a son-in-law. She smiled warmly and said, "This child is Sherri's goddaughter. She is the child of her best friend. I am taking care of her for a while."

Hackett was searching for an answer in his mind. Best friend? But he was not sure about Sherri's social circle. Besides Mrs. Wilson, did she have any other best friends?

Nevertheless, he politely replied, "Mrs. Landor, you are really warm-hearted. There aren't many people as kind as you nowadays."

Juana was delighted to be praised, and she could not help but be talkative. "Oh, it's nothing. I'm just free and have nothing to do. It's good to be able to help young people. Besides, this child is truly adorable. Ruby, this is Uncle Hackett."

Since Hackett entered, Ruby had been cautiously stealing glances. But even after she turned her glance at Juana for a while, she still did not call out as she was told. She lowered her head and quietly continued playing with her toys.

Juana felt a little awkward. This child was usually very good at greeting people. What was wrong with her today? She did not greet Hackett at all..

Joy smiled to ease the situation. "Look, even the child can't stand your appearance. When your father left just now, Ruby even called him Grandpa on her own. But she won't call you. Reflect on yourself and figure out the reason."

Hackett's mind was buzzing. So it was because the little girl called his father "Grandpa" that he was forced to rush back for a paternity test. What was his father thinking? Just because a little girl called him "Grandpa, she could become his granddaughter? It seemed like his father was going crazy over wanting a granddaughter.

However, he maintained his enthusiastic demeanor and seemed not to mind his mother teasing. "Oh, don't worry. There's no rush. You'll definitely have a granddaughter. Right, Mrs. Landor?"

Juana thought Hackett was continuing to talk about something related to Sherri, so she replied, "That's right. We don't need to worry about the children's matters. They definitely have their own plans." Hackett did not reveal the true purpose behind his words, and everyone was immersed in their own thoughts.

After observing the little girl for a while, Hackett genuinely felt that she was really cute. But he was not sure if she resembled him or not. Maybe he should take her back to his room and compare her with the photos in his album. He thought that would be a good method. "Can Uncle Hackett play with you, young lady?"

Ruby hesitated for a moment and then nodded slightly to indicate agreement.

Hackett had his own ulterior motive to avoid his mother and Juana. He said. "Mrs. Landor, it's been a long time since you last met. I'll take the little one to my room to play. You can chat freely."

Joy looked at her son with a suspicious expression. What was he doing? Did he run back from the company just to take care of a child? "Aren't you supposed to go to the company?"

Hackett calmly replied, "Well, Dad said he can't be away from the company for even a minute. The office is more suitable for him. He told me not to go today."

Seeing Joy's improved mood, Juana chimed in. "Stop worrying about Hackett all the time. He's already grown up."

She did not realize that she was also constantly arguing with Sherri at home.

Joy did not criticize her son any further, but just reminded him. "Be careful and make sure Ruby doesn't bump into anything"

"I know" said Hackett and then led Ruby upstairs. But halfway through, Joy started scolding. "Hackett, can't you use your brain? You let Ruby walk on such a high staircase by herself. Don't you have arms to carry her?"

Juana turned her attention to the stairs and indeed saw Ruby struggling to climb them with her short legs. Men really were not suited for taking care of children. They could give you a heart attack.

Hackett paused, not realizing anything was wrong. After all, she was a big kid. Shouldn't she be able to walk by herself? It would help her grow taller if she took more steps. But due to the scrutiny of the two professionals, he slowly crouched down and clumsily lifted Ruby into his arms

His movements were a bit awkward. He extended his right hand, then his left, not sure which hand to use to carry her first.

Joy sighed at her son's confusion and patiently instructed. "One hand goes on top, and the other hand goes below. You don't have to hold her too tightly.

Following his mother's lead, Hackett lifted Ruby into his arms.

Watching the figure of the two of them entering the room, Joy grumbled. "He's already so grown up, but he still doesn't have the demeanor of an adult. Sherri is going to be driven crazy.

Juana laughed happily. "Sherri is the same. It's just that she learned a bit from her good friend these past few years, so she knows more"

Hackett placed Ruby on his bed. "Wait for me, young lady. I will bring something over to play with you."

Hackett opened the drawer and took out his photo album. He flipped to the photos of a similar age as Ruby and glanced at them. Then he carefully looked at Ruby. Shit. It seemed that she resembled him a bit.

His heart started racing, and his hands trembled as he closed the album and put it away.

Turning around, he said to Ruby, "Young lady, let's play a game called Ask and Answer."

Ruby did not understand what game Hackett wanted to play. With her watery eyes, she blinked and nodded.

Hackett did not care if she understood or not. He assumed she did. "Alright, here's the question. If you answer correctly, I will give you something tasty as treats"

Ruby continued to nod, appearing to understand but not fully comprehend.

Hackett felt a bit nervous. He could not believe that an around one-year-old child was making him nervous. "Who is your mommy?" He asked, using his gentlest tone to coax an answer out of her.

As Hackett waited for her response, he felt anxious. Ruby's eyes shifted, and in a sweet, childish voice, she said, "Natalie." Instead of feeling relieved upon receiving the answer, Hackett inexplicably felt a sense of disappointment.

He felt that he must have gone crazy.

But then he thought about it. Natalie, wasn't she Mrs. Wilson? However, this child did not resemble her at all. Instead, she looked a lot like him when he was young

But a child would not mistake her own mother, it was someone she had been calling since she was little. This brought some certainty to his heart, and it seemed that the child truly was not his.

In the next moment, with a particularly positive attitude, Hackett started to scheme. If the child turned out to be Natalie's daughter, it would be interesting. Mr. Wilson was still pursuing his wife, so he wanted to confirm a bit more. "Is your mommy Natalie Foster?"

Ruby nodded, following the rules of the game.

With the confirmed answer, Hackett was now certain that the child was Natalie's. He was sure that his father was making a fuss over nothing. But this child was indeed well-behaved and likable. With a firm grasp, he lifted Ruby onto his lap and casually pulled a few strands of her hair.

"Uncle Hackett saw something dirty in your hair. Let me remove it. Sit on the bed and play for a while. I'll bring you something to eat."

He put the hair in a bag while taking out his favorite potato chips to give to the little one.

"Do you like them? These chips are really good. They're my favorite. I'm sharing them with you, so we're good friends now." He ruffled the little one's hair again.

Polite and well-mannered, Ruby climbed down from the bed, holding the chips, and prepared to go downstairs. "Thank you

“Look at you. So you have not been speaking to me because I did not give you something to eat. Are you going downstairs?”

“Yes” Ruby remembered that her mommy had said not to eat in the room, especially on the bed, as it would attract bugs. However, her language skills were limited, and she did not know how to express herself properly. All she could say was that she was going downstairs.

Hackett found this little girl increasingly adorable. No matter how he looked at her he could not help but like her. Mrs. Wilson had indeed taught her well. She did not seem like Sherri’s child at all. Could a woman have raised such a thoughtful child?

No, definitely not. But there was no way around it. The paternity test still had to be done to avoid being lectured by his father.

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Hackett carried Ruby downstairs, and compared to when he first picked her up, he was a bit more proficient now as the saying said, “Practice makes perfect.”

He gently placed Ruby on the couch and patiently said goodbye to her. “Bye–bye, young lady.”

Joy thought her son was acting a bit strange. He had just returned home for a short while, and now he wanted to go out again. Wouldn’t this leave a bad impression in front of Juana? She glared at her son and said, “Didn’t you say you would not go to the company? Why are you going out again? Just stay at home if there’s nothing to do.”

Hackett slightly tugged the corner of his lips and started to lie. “Mom, I was not planning to go out, but Mr. Wilson and Mr. Roberts wanted to see me for something important, so I have to go for a while.”

Originally, he planned to ask Frank about the child’s biological mother, but he turned out to be too clever. He did not need to exert any effort or resources to solve the case. It also saved him from Frank’s teasing.

When Joy heard that Mr. Wilson and Mr. Roberts wanted to see her son, she did not stop him. Both of them were not people who would mess around. “Go ahead.”

At a private hospital.

Hackett handed the samples to his friend and straightforwardly said, “Do a paternity test for me to determine the relationship.”

He came to a private hospital to avoid Natalie and Sherri, just in case he ran into them. He still had some tricks up his sleeve.

The man in the white coat had a straight nose and wore a pair of gold–rimmed glasses, giving off an elegant vibe. The lenses were thick enough to hide his emotions. A hint of a smile appeared in his eyes upon hearing Hackett’s request.

Chris Yamin smiled and took one hand to receive the samples while the other remained in his pocket. He glanced at the samples and looked meaningfully at Hackett. “Could it be your illegitimate child?”

Hackett was a little annoyed by the direct hit of his mind. "Enough with the nonsense. Someone asked me to do it. If you don't want to, I'll ask somebody else."

Chris continued to smile mischievously. Then why did you come to my private hospital? Why not go to Athana Hospital? Tell me, is it for the paternity test?"

Hackett remained silent. After being a doctor for so many years, he understood things well enough. He decided not to continue teasing. "Fine, I'll wait. It'll take three hours. Go to my office and have a cup of coffee."

After speaking, he turned and entered his private research room.

Chris was the young heir of the Yamin family in Athana, and their main industry was hospitals. They had been in the medical profession for generations, from nurses to professors. The Yamin family also owned numerous private hospitals in Athana, and the one they were in belonged to Chris. Besides being expensive, it had always been in competition with public hospitals.

Having Chris personally conducted the test, Hackett felt more at ease and relieved. He walked towards Chris's office. casually pouring himself a cup of coffee, lazily sitting in the chair, and playing League of Legends on his mobile phone.

Unconsciously, he played the game for several hours. Chris pushed the door open and saw Hackett immersed in the game. "You seem to be quite relaxed"

Hackett did not even raise his head upon hearing Chris' words. He felt confident that he had already inquired about the child's mother, so he did not think the child was his. He spoke calmly, "Well, I am here to wait for the results from you. What is it?" He continued playing the game on his phone, without raising his gaze.

Chris threw a thin piece of paper directly onto the table. "Tell your so-called friend that the child is indeed yours. Get ready to be a father."

Upon hearing this, Hackett's hand holding the phone trembled, almost dropping it. He quickly caught it with his agile reflexes. The screen went black after being killed in the game, and his eyes revealed a hint of shock. He looked up at Chris in disbelief. "Are you sure you did not make a mistake?"

Chris suspected the reason behind Hackett's big reaction, which could only be that he did not know he was the child's biological father. Otherwise, why would he be so surprised? "With this overwhelming reaction, are you unable to accept that the child is your own, or are you just trying to find an excuse for yourself? Don't think of shifting the responsibility onto me. The paternity test is accurate, don't you dare suspect my expertise. Even if you take it to Athana Hospital, the result will be the same. Keep the report and accept that the child is yours."

Ignoring Hackett's shock, Chris went to make himself a cup of coffee. "You still have time to slowly accept it. Judging from the hair sample you brought, the child is about a year old. It's your lack of morals. The child has grown up without you fulfilling any fatherly responsibilities. Do you even have the audacity? Are you trying to become a scumbag?"

The smile that had frozen on Hackett's face from a few seconds ago remained there. He did not bother arguing with Chris anymore about the child being someone else's. His mind was in turmoil, like a roller coaster ride. A person who had been

single for 29 years suddenly became a father. Wasn't this leap a bit too quick? With a trembling hand, he picked up the paper from the table, causing it to shake along with his hand. His gaze landed on the last line, 99.99%.

Hackett stood still like a statue, motionless. His thoughts were in chaos. Damn it, Sherri not only kept his child but also raised it.

She was capable enough to have his child for two years overseas and hid it completely from him. She planned to deprive him of being a father for a lifetime. And that child, how did she tell him? Her mother was Natalie, and even Mrs. Landor said the child did not belong to him. These manipulations were definitely to hide the truth from him. Just thinking about it made him feel like he had to give Sherri a lesson.

In the midst of his thoughts, Hackett suddenly had a question. He vaguely remembered his mother mentioning that the child's mother had given birth to twins. The daughter was his, but what about the boy? He made a daring guess. If the children were the same age, then the boy would be....

With this answer in mind, he felt somewhat relieved. At least now he knew the children were his, and that arrogant man probably had no idea. He would keep it a secret and never ever tell him.

Chris thought that Hackett was so happy that he was acting silly with his joy. "What's the big deal? It's just having a child. Why are you so happy?"

Mentioning the child, Hackett thought to himself. "Of course. How cute the child looks! It's not like I can't accept having such a beautiful child. As for the child's mother, that's still pending. I still haven't settled the score with her for what she did to me. Now I have one more reason."

After figuring it out, he got up and tidied his clothes in a joyful mood. The shock on his face was gone. "I'm leaving. Thanks, I'll treat you to a meal next time."

Chris did not stop him, thinking he might have things to take care of. "Sure, I'll be waiting. Hurry up and go. I'm busy."

Hackett did not go home; instead, he drove to the Blackwell Group in a complex mood. He kept reminding himself that he was going to be a father and that he had such an adorable little girl.

After parking the car, he held his phone and occasionally touched the paper in his pocket, afraid of losing it. He was filled with surprise, excitement, and an indescribable mix of emotions.

Just three hours ago, he was single, and now he was a father. What a leap it was... Sherri Landor, this woman really surprised and startled him.

If his mother knew that the little girl she liked turned out to be her granddaughter, she would be overjoyed. As he thought about it, he entered the elevator.

Seeing the boss with a smile on his face, the secretary guessed that something good must have happened. "Mr. Blackwell, did you hit on another girl?"

Hackett had a good temperament and always joked with the people in the office, so everyone found him easy to get along with. Even the secretary could ask random questions about his private life.

Still maintaining his smile, Hackett's mind was filled with the face of Ruby from earlier that morning. He had to admit that his genes were good. How cute the child was!

After coming back to his senses, he replied to the secretary, "No, I preserve my moral integrity well. Don't spread rumors."

The secretary laughed. It was fine to use the term for others, but was it appropriate for him? He was the one who had been trending with gossip on the net every now and then. Nevertheless, she maintained her professional smile.

Hackett walked into his father's office. Without waiting for his father to ask, he took out the paper excitedly from his pocket and carefully spread it out in front of him, wearing a proud smile on his face.

Nathan stopped signing the documents and took the paper to look at it. His gaze also landed on the last line, and his eyes narrowed with excitement. However, he was afraid that his son would be cocky if he reacted overwhelmingly, so he suppressed his emotions, lifted his head, and said, "What's your plan?"

Hackett thought his father would praise him, but the first thing his father said was this question, which caught him off guard. On the way there, he had not thought about it. He only thought the child was cute and that he could accept it. He had not really considered other issues.

Hackett was confused by the question. He scratched his head, not knowing how to answer. He was afraid that his father would lecture him on the matter if anything answered wrongly, so he chose to be silent, waiting for his father's guidance.

Seeing his son's expression, Nathan had a rough idea. Most likely. Hackett had not thought about what to do. So, you're not planning to let my granddaughter come back to our family and will continue having someone else take responsibility for her? If your mother finds out, you'll definitely get scolded"

Hackett felt a bit smug. His mother had been demanding grandchildren all the time. Now that he had produced such a beautiful child, she would be overjoyed. How could she bear to lecture him? Although he had the thought in mind, he did not show any signs of pride on his face. "I have not decided yet."

Nathan asked directly, "Whose child is it? Is it the friend of Miss Landor?" He remembered his wife really liked Miss Landor.

If the child belonged to someone else, his wife's dream of having Miss Landor as a daughter-in-law would be shattered, but the dream of having a granddaughter would come true.

"It's Sherri Landor's" He was extremely certain that he had never had any physical relationship with Mrs. Wilson, and the only person who could have entrusted the child to her was Sherri.

A hint of surprise flashed in Nathan's eyes. His wife seemed to have it all, a dream daughter-in-law and a granddaughter. But on the surface, he reprimanded his son. "How could that lady let someone else take care of her child? You need to reflect on the reasons. If you were reliable, she would not have secretly given birth to your child without telling you."

Hackett was a bit frustrated with Sherri's actions. He scratched his head in annoyance, leaning back in his office chair. "I

know."

Just a moment ago, he had thought of seeking revenge, but now his father's words had left him somewhat confused. "Apologize sincerely to Miss Landor and try to make her forgive you. Don't act carelessly. Don't tell your mother about this for now to avoid causing a big fuss." Nathan could imagine the scene once his wife knew the truth. Right now, he did not know what Miss Landor thought about their son. It was better to observe quietly and wait for the dust to settle.

Hackett obediently accepted his father's advice. Now, any desire for revenge had completely disappeared. The thought of defeating Sherri had become irrelevant.

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Unaware of her daughter's identity being revealed, Sherri was currently having pizza with Natalie. They had not gone out together for a long time after coming back, and even on Sundays when they went out, they had to bring their children. This was the first time they left the children at home and went on a date as best friends.

As they savored the long-awaited taste, Sherri's mood was filled with delight, her face expressing satisfaction. This is so good**

The corners of Natalie's lips curled up and picked up a slice of pizza that Sherri liked for her. "With the way you're eating, the waiters will think it's your first time having pizza in the city."

Sherri did not think it was embarrassing at all and continued to eat heartily. "I'm not a lady. Why should I pretend to be one? As long as you like me, it's enough."

Natalie took another slice of pizza for herself and dipped it in the hot sauce. "You've already succeeded in making people misunderstand our relationship." After saying that, she subtly motioned for Sherri to look at the couple who had just passed by and kept glancing back at them.

Sherri burst into laughter. "Our love has been witnessed." After saying that, she even blew a kiss in the air towards Natalie, right in front of the passing couple..

This further increased the misunderstanding. They did not feel embarrassed at all but rather made the couple who was watching them feel embarrassed. The two women were shamelessly displaying their affection in a more exaggerated manner.

As long as they were not embarrassed, it was others who would feel awkward. As long as they were thick-skinned enough, they would live with confidence.

Both of their attention was focused on the couple who had just passed by. They enjoyed the situation. Suddenly, a man wearing a mask sat down next to them, startling Sherri to the point where she almost jumped up.

They both looked at the man wearing a black mask with vigilance. The man was dressed in a beige coat, a shirt underneath, and wore a cap. The entire outfit covered him completely, giving off a sense of a celebrity avoiding the paparazzi.

Natalie and Sherri wore the same expression as they looked at the unexpected guest. Since the man sat next to Sherri, she spoke first, with a slightly displeased expression on her face. "Who are you? Why are you sitting with us?"

When the man heard her voice, he took off his hat and mask. Once the others saw his face, their expressions turned to surprise, and they both said at the same time, "Hackett?" Their voices suddenly rose, attracting quite a bit of attention. Hackett, with an embarrassed smile, took off his hat and greeted them. "Hey, Mrs. Wilson."

Natalie corrected his address to her once again. "Mr. Blackwell, change how you address me. Call me by my name. No need for formality. Besides, you are older than me."

Sherri got annoyed and slapped the back of Hackett's head. "Are you crazy? Coming to a pizza hub as if you're a celebrity. Go away, don't ruin our mood for pizzas."

The way Hackett looked at Sherri today was a little different. He turned around to carefully observe her and found that the child indeed resembled her to some extent, especially the mouth and the gaze. He had never observed this woman carefully before, but now he found her to have a good figure and a pretty face. No wonder his mother liked her so much and desperately wanted them to be together.

It was just that she lacked femininity and was fierce.

But upon closer inspection, she was really good-looking, particularly captivating. Unintentionally, he got lost in his thoughts. Sherri and Natalie did not know what was on Hackett's mind, leaving them puzzled.

Sherri felt a bit uncomfortable under his direct gaze and slapped him on the back of his head again with force. "What are you staring at? I know I'm good-looking, but it's not for you to look at."

After being slapped, Hackett regained his senses and turned to Sherri. "You think you're a sculpture, charging for people to look at you? You've gone crazy thinking about money."

Sherri pretended to slap him again, but this time, Hackett directly grabbed her wrist. The warmth of his palm transferred to her wrist, causing a shiver to run through her. She stared at him with disdain and pulled her wrist back.

Then, Hackett called the waiter and asked for an additional tableware set. "Mrs. Wilson Natalie, add one for me as well. The meal is on me,"

Seeing Hackett had already asked for an additional tableware set, Natalie had no idea what else she could say

Sherri did not like it. "Who asked you to pay? I have money. I don't need the little money from you"

Hackett calmly replied, "Miss Sherri, but I need to have this meal with you more than anything else."

Sherri could not react for a second. This guy was crazy. She glanced at Natalie, indicating that Hackett was insane. She found him quite strange today.

Natalie shrugged her shoulders in response to the exchanged glances and prepared to eat. She did not know what was going

on either.

Hackett stood up to get the sauce, took off his coat, and placed it on the seat. Sherri, feeling annoyed, stepped on the lining of his coat, leaving a dark mark that looked particularly conspicuous. Feeling a bit embarrassed, she quickly covered the coat to hide the evidence of her crime.

Looking at the series of childish actions from her best friend, Natalie said. "I suspect he likes you and came here to pursue you."

Sherri raised her head with a slightly smug expression. "Do I look like someone easy to pursue? Since someone is paying. let's order some more food."

Natalie quickly handed the menu to Sherri, knowing that she would feel better once they ordered more.

"Order whatever you want and as much as you like." They could not bankrupt Mr. Blackwell with just a single meal, but it would improve Sherri's mood, so it was worth it.

After a while, Hackett returned. He could not handle spicy food, so he brought back powdered cheese for dressing. Sherri and Natalie ordered a pizza with two different flavors to satisfy their palette.

The sharp-eyed Sherri noticed the item Hackett brought back and came up with a plan in her mind. "Oh. Mr. Blackwell. how can you come to Thriving Pizza Hub without trying their recommended hot sauce? It's so boring. Let me add some signature hot sauce for you. It's fantastic."

Sitting opposite, Natalie watched the two bickering in amusement and had an inexplicable urge to laugh. A thought came to her mind that they were quite a match as a couple.

Hackett lowered his gaze and saw that Sherri had already added two drops of hot sauce. Instantly, the pizza on his plate shimmered with a reddish glow of oil. He unconsciously gulped, but he held back when he thought of his father's words before leaving

Seeing Hackett's furrowed brow, Sherri knew he could not handle that level of spiciness. This hot sauce was extremely spicy. and normally she and Natalie could only add a tiny drop. But she had added two drops for Hackett. It was impossible that he would not be overwhelmed by the spiciness. Simply thinking of this made her mood improve a lot.

Natalie watched the show in front of her the entire time. It seemed obvious that Hackett disliked the hot sauce on his pizza. but she also wanted to see how he would handle it.

Seeing that Hackett did not pick up the pizza for a long time, Sherri began to urge him, adopting a warm and polite tone as if he were a guest in her home. "Mr. Blackwell, why aren't you eating? If you don't like it, there's no need to force yourself Just get up and leave." It was a clear threat. He could either eat or leave. If he wanted to stay and eat, he had to finish that slice

of pizza with the hot sauce.

Provoked by Sherri Hackett took a deep breath and tremblingly picked up the slice of pizza. It was just having some hot sauce, what could be difficult for him? Hackett Blackwell, the heir of the Blackwell

family in Athana. With a resigned look on his face, he picked up a bit of spinach on the pizza, dipped it in the sauce, and put it directly into his mouth. Instantly, his taste buds exploded with the fiery heat, and a surge of spiciness rushed to his head. He resisted the urge to jump up and look for water, but his facial expression was already unsightly

Natalie could not bear to watch, her eyebrows furrowed in sympathy, and she asked, "Is it good?" She noticed that Hackett did not chew much before swallowing. This level of spiciness was difficult even for her and Sherri to handle.

Hackett had already cursed Sherri for thousand times in his heart. "Damn it, I will play you to death one day. Revenge is a dish best served cold" With great difficulty, he forced a smile, and against his will, he said. "It's okay, it's pretty good"

Natalie's mouth twitched awkwardly, wondering what was going on with Mr. Blackwell today. How could he endure Sherr so well. Then, she thought to herself "If you like it, then you could eat more. There's no need to be polite to eat less" After all, Hackett was paying the bill. However, she did not say her thoughts out loud, just kept them in her mind.

Sherri was not a fool. With just one look, she could tell that this guy could not handle spicy food. Seeing him in such a state made her extremely happy. She enthusiastically picked up another slice of pizza for Hackett. "Eat more, have some other flavors to balance the spiciness"

Hackett wanted to thank her but resisted the urge. He endured and did not mention anything about their child.

On the way here, he had already thought of a plan to get his daughter back. He could not let Mr. Wilson have such a cute daughter

After about 40 minutes of eating, Hackett had already drunk six bottles of yogurt. Basically, he would take a bite of food and then a sip of yogurt, otherwise, it would be difficult to swallow due to the spiciness. Toward the end, he found it hard to continue. The heat seemed to rise from his throat, his head buzzing, and the air he exhaled was hot. He did not understand why so many people liked to eat spicy food and enjoyed it so much. Some people even could not live without it. They were crazy. He

could not accept it anymore. If he continued eating, the spiciness would send him to death. He made up his mind never to eat it again.

He slowly put down the pizza and pretended nothing was wrong, but the color of his lips exposed that he could not handle the spiciness anymore. "Natalie, I have some business to attend to at the company, so I'll leave first. I'll pay, you guys continue eating"

Natalie could tell that he had reached his limit, so she did not hesitate and said, "Sure, thanks"

Sherri, in a great mood, said. "Mr. Blackwell, take care. Let's eat together next time if you'd like."

At this moment, Hackett just wanted to leave and find some water to drink. His stomach was full of hot sauce, and he felt like there was still the sauce sloshing around inside him. Hearing Sherri's words, he paused, and his footsteps, which had started moving towards the exit, turned back to provoke her "If I invite you next time, you dare to come."

As expected. Sherri was provoked without thinking “If you invite me, I dare to come. I’m not afraid of you.”

Satisfied with the response, Hackett secretly laughed to himself. “Alright, remember your words. Do not be afraid like a

chicken”

Sherri had not realized that she had been trapped. She disdainfully snorted.

Hackett did not bother saying anything more to her and left hastily, walking away quickly. Sherri watched his back and could not help but let a smile creep onto her face. “It’s so funny. He must be looking for water to drink”

Natalie was also feeling full. As she recalled Hackett’s expression while having the hot sauce, she could not help but feel a little sorry for him. But then she had a second thought. Could it be that Mr. Blackwell had really fallen for Sherri? Many doubts filled her mind.

“I suspect that he might actually like you. Otherwise, how could he endure your prank? You two have never been compatible, and I’ve never seen him give in to you like this”

Sherri was in a good mood and did not mind. She responded indifferently. “Who cares? In any case. I’m not that easy to get anyway

[Chapter 145](#)

In the Lighthouse Club, as the music blared, the bar’s dim lights transformed into a mesmerizing display of colors, casting an enchanting glow on the faces of the attractive crowd. The dance floor exuded an irresistible air of mystery and allure.

With the rhythm of the music, the atmosphere on the dance floor reached its crescendo. The revelers gyrated and swayed, their movements infused with an ecstatic energy that intoxicated them.

Meanwhile, in a secluded and soundproofed card room upstairs, an oasis of tranquility amidst the cacophony below, three out of the four occupants leisurely puffed on their cigarettes. At the same time, one donned a mask, lending an air of paradox.

Hackett had been having a remarkable streak of luck tonight. A mountain of chips towered before him as he sported a wicked grin. “Mr. Wilson, your luck seems to have deserted you tonight. I almost feel guilty for winning so effortlessly.”

The man continued to ignore him, his mind wandering during the card game, inevitably leading to Hackett snatching victory. Thoughts of Natalie and her cold indifference plagued him, playing on a loop in his mind like an unrelenting slideshow. He yearned to press the pause button, but his chest tightened with frustration.

Despite finding Frank’s constant stream of messages utterly disdainful, he secretly engaged in the same behavior. Day after day, he persisted in sending messages and delivering meals, desperate to make his presence felt. However, that woman showed absolutely no inclination to acknowledge him. His letters vanished into thin air as if they were dropped in the ocean’s deepest depths, generating no waves of response. It was evident that he needed to adopt a different approach which was a bold confrontation.

Unbeknownst to Hackett, Trevon was engrossed in contemplating how to win back Natalie. Ignoring him only fueled Hackett's determination. Today, he was in a good mood, and having a loving daughter seemed to bring him tremendous luck. He had never won such substantial money from Mr. Wilson before.

With a cigarette delicately held between his fingers, Frank glanced at the visibly troubled expression on Trevon's face. "Missing Natalie, huh?"

Trevon fixed Frank with a skeptical gaze. "Do you suddenly possess the power of mind-reading, Frank?"

As for Natalie, Hackett suppressed his inner desires, opting to keep his secrets to himself.

Just as their stomachs inconveniently growled, rumbling incessantly, a sudden string of flatulence followed suit. The other three individuals simultaneously turned their gaze toward Hackett, their disgust evident on their faces, without bothering to

conceal it

Hackett had eaten a mishmash of food that day, and due to their proximity, practically anyone who took a breath could catch a whiff of an aromatic scent.

Unable to bear the odor any longer, Frank held his breath and stood up. The stench was simply unbearable, nearly making him feel nauseated. "What the hell have you been eating?" he exclaimed, feeling as if the foul fragrance permeated his very

mouth.

Trevon extended his slender fingers to cover his mouth and nose, rising from his feet with a furrowed brow. Holding his breath, he swiftly opened a window, leaning closer to inhale the fresh air, ignoring Hackett.

Jim, donning a mask, fared relatively better than the other two who were directly assaulted by the fragrance.

Hackett awkwardly clutched his stomach, squeezing his buttocks, and mustered a sheepish apology. "Sorry... grumble, grumble, grumble."

Hackett thought to himself. It was beyond his control. It seemed inevitable. He hurriedly went to the restroom with one hand still covering his backside.

The other three individuals had lost all interest in the card game. Trevon sternly commanded Jim. "Open the door."

Following the order, Jim approached the door and swung it wide open. A chilly gust of wind swept in at an angle, striking Trevon directly. In an unfortunate twist of fate, Hackett's final emission met Trevon head-on, causing his complexion to darken with an intense scowl. Holding his breath, he swiftly exited the room, followed closely by Frank, who couldn't bear the situation any longer. Jim was the last to leave. The space was now empty, with only Hackett left inside the restroom.

Just as Hackett stepped out, the room had already emptied, devoid of anyone else. Being a frequent visitor to the Lither

Club, he knew exactly where they had gone.

As he was about to leave, his stomach protested again, growling incessantly. It seemed another urgent matter was at hand, so he hurriedly returned to the restroom.

Engrossed in their conversation about the ongoing issues with the commercial project, Trevon and Frank paid no heed to the repetitive back-and-forth sounds. They smoked their cigarettes, discussing matters related to the business street. However, Jim sensed something was amiss. It had been half an hour, and Mr. Blackwell seemed to have vanished.

Feeling skeptical, Jim asked, "Mr. Wilson, should I check on Mr. Blackwell?"

Trevon lifted an eyebrow, casting a glance at Jim "Are you planning to deliver toilet paper? Just stay put. If he can't come

out, he'll give us a call. If he enjoys staying in there, let him be." Trevon wondered if Mr. Blackwell's luck with money was indeed that good. He wanted to see if he could handle the losses.

Unable to argue with Mr. Wilson, Jim reluctantly retook his seat, silently sympathizing with Mr. Blackwell. Perhaps losing money was for the best in Mr. Blackwell's case,

Suddenly, Frank's phone rang. He glanced at the screen, seeing that it was Hackett calling. A wider grin spread across his face. "Looks like he's stuck in there."

Trevon pulled out a cigarette, a smirk forming on his lips. "Tell the manager to bring anti-diarrheal medicine to Hackett in the restroom"

Jim silently thanked Trevon for not sending him to check on Hackett. "Alright."

After approximately an hour, Hackett leaned against the wall as he entered, his legs trembling. "Do you guys have any shame, leaving me alone over there?"

Trevon remained unfazed, his expression calm and distant. "Should I squat next to you then?"

Jim couldn't help but let out a suppressed laugh, unable to contain his amusement.

Hackett was undoubtedly drained due to the effects of the chili peppers. He slumped onto the nearby couch. Frank wrinkled his nose in distaste. "Take a seat on a chair. Don't turn my couch into a stench-filled mess and disrupt my sleep"

Once Hackett lay down, he had no desire to move. He was too exhausted, having made countless trips to the restroom at least twenty times. "Damn it, I didn't soil my pants again."

Frank couldn't resist his biting tongue. "Who knows if you even had time to drop your trousers.

Hackett exerted all his strength to flung a pillow toward Frank, but his agile hands deftly caught it.

Trevon, ever composed, couldn't help but be curious about what had caused this predicament. "What did you eat tonight to give yourself such an explosive reaction?"

This prompted Hackett to open up and vent his frustrations. "It's all because of that woman, Sherri. She practically forced me to devour a massive bowl of chili peppers"

The three individuals in the room knew that Hackett despised spicy food and typically avoided it. Their curiosity was piqued as they wondered what could drive someone who steered clear of spice to consume such a large bowl of chili peppers. Were his efforts an unconventional way of impressing Sherri?

Frank couldn't resist adding, "Are you planning to become blood brothers with Miss Landor? With chili peppers as your

testament?"

Hackett, feeling discontent, let out a string of profanities. "Damn it, she's just out to mess with me."

Trevon, curious and with a hint of skepticism in his eyes, asked, "So you're willingly allowing her to mess with you? Go back and entertain Frank in his damn restroom."

Hackett swiftly contemplated a strategy to divert Trevon's attention from the actual situation. He altered the narrative rather than revealing the truth, displaying a facade of admiration. "Isn't it all about demonstrating our respect for Natalie? She has a penchant for spicy cuisine, and I'm willingly sacrificing myself to accompany her."

Upon hearing that Natalie enjoyed spicy food, Trevon recalled the scene of her devouring durian at Adare Manor. It wasn't just spicy but also downright pungent. It seemed she had quite the penchant for spicy flavors. Trevon silently considered the possibility of gradually developing his tolerance for spicy food, making mental plans. After all, accepting chili peppers wouldn't be out of the question.

Maintaining a poker face, Trevon inquired, "Did you have dinner with her tonight?"

Hackett couldn't help but feel a sense of satisfaction, showing no signs of holding back. "You got that right. And Miss Landor. I reckon you're mighty envious."

With a playful tone, Trevon retorted, "Envious of your gastrointestinal adventure?"

Hackett fell silent, realizing he couldn't outwit Trevon in a battle of words. He decided to refrain from arguing with a man consumed by jealousy. By now, the manager's anti-diarrheal medicine had provided significant relief, easing his urge to use

the restroom

Frank cut straight to the point, asking. "So, is this your strategy for pursuing Miss Landor?"

With a slight sense of relief in his stomach, Hackett reclined on the couch, clasping his hands behind his head. His legs felt weak, but he calmly responded, "Well, you could say that. Love means accepting someone wholly, right? So, why not cater to her preference?"

Jim exposed the apparent contradiction, sensing Mr. Blackwell's conflicting motives. "Mr. Blackwell, didn't you mention seeking revenge in your pursuit of Miss Landor? Why then go out of your way to

accommodate her tastes And in the process, you've even given yourself an upset stomach. It seems like you're chasing after her at the risk of your well-being"

Hackett was momentarily at a loss for words, unsure how to respond. He quickly spun a tale, not wanting to embarrass

himself before his buddies. "Well, isn't it about striking fast and infiltrating the enemy from within? Starting with their food

preferences seems like the quickest way."

Jim couldn't help but think, "Your approach to pursuing someone is quite unconventional. You're willing to put your life on

the line. Thankfully. Miss Landor enjoys spicy food. But what if she had a taste for something like durian, just like Mrs. Wilson? Would you go along with that too?"

Trevon's thoughts aligned with Jim's. The woman had a liking for durian, but did that mean he had to force himself to like it

too? It seemed no different from the nonsense Hackett was spouting. The thought left him with a momentary scowl.

There had to be other ways to win someone's heart. Hackett's tactics weren't for him, especially when they involved durian, a fruit he simply couldn't stomach.

[Chapter 146](#)

Having just finished her shower, Natalie prepared to slip into the cozy comfort of her bed and won the her son ter sleep. As she settled under the covers, her phone chimed with a message. Without a doubt, it wors from that man. "Sorry, can you retune me from your blocklist?

She swiftly dismissed the message, paying it no mind, and lifted the covers to snuggle in Tenderly, the tidied up her soHIS bedding. "Jasper, it's 8.00 PM. for us to turn in. Little ones must be fast asleep before 220 PM Close your little peepers now."

The little one blinked his innocent eyes, filled with anticipation. "Mommy, Auntie Ava. Unele Joseph ?

Upon hearing his words, the little one yearned for his Auntie Ava and Uncle Joseph Natalie playfully pinched his tiny noe and leaned down to give him an affectionate nudge. "You miss them, huh? Well, we'll have to wait a little longer. Auntie Aora and Uncle Joseph will be here next month. When they arrive, Mommy will take some time off so we can all go out and have

a blast. How does that sound?"

The little one beamed with delight, his face radiating pure innocence. "Sounds awesome" And with that, he obediently closed his eyes.

Natalie leaned down once again, planting a tender kiss on Jasper's forehead "Sleep tight. Mommy's right here to watch over you."

The early spring sunlight bathed everything in its gentle warmth the following morning, accompanied by a playful breeze that tickled the skin.

This kind of weather was made for riding a motorbike, and the thought alone excited Natalie. She made her way to the garage, fastened her helmet securely, inserted the key into the ignition. The engine roared to life, and the exhilarating sound sent a surge of energy through her. With her long legs grounded, she started the bike and expertly positioned her legs on each side. As she accelerated, she couldn't help but notice the envious glances she attracted from onlookers.

Just as Natalie set off, a sleek black Maybach followed closely. He had sent her a message the night before, but she had yet to dismiss it, not expecting any response. She had refrained from blocking his new number, a gesture of tolerance.

Jim arrived early to pick up Trevon and couldn't help but admire the sight of Mrs. Wilson on her motorbike. He grinned and complimented, "Mr. Wilson, don't you think Mrs. Wilson looks incredibly cool riding that motorbike? Can you imagine how exhilarating it would be if you caught up to her one day, cruising together on the open road?"

The image flashed vividly in his mind, portraying a scene of sheer elegance and beauty, just like an exquisite couple. Yes, the uncertainty lingered as Mr. Wilson contemplated how long he would wait. His slow and cautious approach to wooing Natalie seemed akin to a snail's pace, unlike the proactive nature of Mr. Blackwell. Although Mr. Blackwell's methods carried risks, he had at least made a bold move to assert his presence before Miss Landor.

Simultaneously, Trevon's thoughts conjured an alluring vision of himself and Natalie riding motorbikes together. The image appeared enchanting and filled him with longing.

Observing the lack of response from Trevon seated behind him, Jim began to regret his playful comment. After a short while, Trevon said, "Prepare a dress suitable for someone around 5.9 feet tall. It should be long, reaching the floor with a daring high slit. And don't forget a wig and earrings."

Jim abruptly hit the brakes, fearing he had misheard. He quickly regained control of the car, causing Trevon to be jostled slightly. A somber expression settled on Wilson's face, but he refrained from uttering a word.

After stabilizing the car, Jim cautiously began to speak, "Mr. Wilson. Are you. Are you the one who wants to wear it?" As he finished his sentence, the expression on his face went from anticipation to a mix of confusion and amusement, for he couldn't help but imagine Mr. Wilson wearing a dress, high heels, and long flowing hair. It seemed mismatched and out of place, suppressing his urge to laugh.

Trevon's face grew even more grim. "Enough with the useless chatter. I told you to prepare, so get it done. And buy an inconspicuous voice changer as well."

Jim remained silent. Was Mr. Wilson considering transforming into a woman to pursue Mrs. Wilson? It seemed utterly

unbelievable.

Noticing Jim at the wheel, lost in inappropriate thoughts, Trevon interjected abruptly. "Stop indulging in those absurd fantasies."

Jim contemplated sharing the astonishing news with Frank and the others if given the opportunity. Is Mr. Wilson planning to dress in women's attire to pursue Mrs. Wilson? Well, the mental image was downright comical.

Meanwhile, Sherri walked into the office and immediately noticed a conspicuous bouquet of fiery red roses adorning her desk. It commanded attention, its size hinting at a generous amount of at least 99 blooms.

Without setting down her bag, she reached for the bouquet, curiosity piqued by the early morning surprise. Her delicate hand grasped the card, finding its contents a tad cliché "Spring has arrived. Love is blowing in I offer this bouquet of roses to express my heartfelt affection. Waste no time, my fondness for you. From your admirer, Hackett"

Sherri stared at the card momentarily, a hint of smugness tugging at her expression. She couldn't help but feel a twinge of

superiority. Well, it seemed like Hackett had developed a liking for her. Good choice, she thought to herself.

Without hesitation, she pulled out her phone and snapped a photo of the bouquet with the card, swiftly sending it to her best friend.

Meanwhile, Natalie was changing clothes, feeling relatively upbeat. She noticed her phone screen light up on the table and took her time finishing her outfit before picking it up. As she read the message, a wave of discomfort washed over her. "That's quite touching, she responded with a voice message, revealing a slight unease.

Sherri promptly replied with a text message. "Do you think I'm so easily moved? Nonetheless, it does add a pleasant touch to the office atmosphere. Would you like me to share half of it with you?"

Natalie quickly declined, "No, thank you. I couldn't possibly accept. Enjoy it yourself."

Sherri didn't push the matter further and tucked the card away in a drawer. She was curious to see how long this person's infatuation would last. The bouquet found its place in a corner, as she knew better than to bring them home and face Juana's judgment.

In the afternoon, Hackett convinced Joy to invite Juana for a shopping trip. He insisted he could handle the kid, employing a mix of persistence and charm until Joy finally relented.

Within a bustling amusement park in Athana, a handsome man joyfully accompanied a little girl, their laughter filling the air. They took turns sliding down the slides and bouncing on the trampoline, their happiness evident in their bright smiles. Unbeknownst to them, a cunning individual discreetly captured this heartwarming scene on camera. Hackett was utterly engrossed in creating cherished memories with Ruby, unaware of the observer lurking in the shadows.

He was dressed in a casual gray sports outfit, intentionally embracing a relaxed, laid-back look for their outing. "Having a good time? What else would you like to play? Dad's here to play with you."

Ruby's gaze was instantly drawn to a vibrant ball pit, and Hackett understood her desire without a word. "You want to play with the balls, don't you? Alright, let's make our little angel's wish come true."

The world of children is refreshingly uncomplicated. Unlike adults, their desires are effortlessly revealed through their eyes and expressions, which often remain inscrutable. Children's smiles blossom quickly, spreading joy to those around them. Hackett scooped up Ruby with outstretched arms, his lithe legs carrying them toward the ball pit. Ruby clutched a ball as they entered, contemplating aiming it at Hackett. Standing frozen in place, a hint of nervousness tinged her demeanor. Sensing her hesitation, Hackett lowered himself into the sea of balls, nestling amidst the colorful chaos. "Ruby, give it a try. It's so cozy down here," he coaxed, playfully tugging at her dress.

The enchanting sight of father and daughter reclining in the ball pit caught the attention of nearby mothers. They couldn't help but be captivated by the extraordinary bond between Hackett and Ruby. "Well, is that your daughter? She's just too adorable and unique. You have the patience and dedication to spend quality time like this with your child. It's a rarity these days."

Hackett couldn't help but feel a sense of pride as he acknowledged Ruby's adorable appearance. "Well, Aunt, my daughter is quite the angel. When it comes to daughters, they deserve nothing but the best. Ruby is my little sweetheart," he proudly declared, quoting a line he had stumbled upon while browsing the internet the previous night.

Aunt, the woman he had talked with, smiled and replied, "Spoiling our daughters is just the beginning. We should also cherish our wives. Childbirth is far from a walk in the park. It's a tough journey that men like you can't truly comprehend. Opening the birth canal feels like breaking bones, and the pain is excruciating. If you ever get the chance, you should try to understand and support your wife through it."

Hackett found himself momentarily speechless. How could he possibly comprehend such an experience? He had never given much thought to women's intense pain and sacrifices during childbirth. Sherri's journey remained a mystery to him. Why did women willingly choose to bring new life into the world if it was so arduous? These questions lingered in his mind, prompting a profound contemplation that took him to distant realms.

Sensing her father's distraction, Ruby tugged at his hand with her tiny fingers.

Snapping back to the present moment, Hackett smiled and crouched down, lifting Ruby into his arms again, ready to embark on their next adventure together.

[Chapter 147](#)

The early morning sunlight painted a picturesque scene, casting a warm golden hue over the bustling city of Athana Hackett, long absent from the public eye, once again became the talk of the town, dominating the trending topics and capturing the collective attention with hashtags, "Mr. Blackwell's secret daughter," "Captivating moments of Mr. Blackwell bonding with his daughter at the amusement park" and "Unveiling the mystery of who holds the key to Mr. Blackwell's heart?"

The news sent shockwaves through the online community, igniting a frenzy of discussion and intrigue. Comment sections overflowed with many responses, surpassing tens of thousands in mere moments. The viral sensation spread like wildfire, with comment after comment pouring in, creating a captivating whirlwind of opinions, speculations, and anticipation.

Gossip, the kind that spread like wildfire, was when the whole world mistakenly believed something to be the ultimate truth.

This sensational trending topic weighed heavily on the hearts of countless girls in Athana, each harboring different motives. Some longed to climb the social ladder, others were secretly fascinated, and many were simply in awe. The allure stemmed from Hackett's undeniable charm, a trait that radiated through Ruby's enchanting beauty, a testament to their exceptional genes.

Among the countless comments, one read, "This little girl is undeniably beautiful. I can only imagine her mother must also be a stunning woman."

Yet, a tinge of jealousy crept in with another comment, "Obviously, only someone attractive could capture Mr. Blackwell's attention. Looks are all that matter to him."

"Let's not jump to conclusions so hastily. She may be a wealthy heiress or come from a distinguished background. We should refrain from making sweeping assumptions."

"Do you believe that? If she were from a prestigious family, Mr. Blackwell would have proudly announced it. Keeping her hidden implies she lacks the status to be publicly acknowledged, just an ordinary person yearning for recognition."

This statement garnered numerous likes from commenters who shared the same sentiment. After all, the Blackwell family held prominent status in Athana, and if it were a union between affluent families, there would be no need for such secrecy. This action only fueled suspicions about the woman's background, suggesting she might not meet societal expectations. Clad in sterile attire, Natalie emerged from the operating theater and made her way to the handwashing station. Nearby, a group of doctors engaged in lively conversation.

"Have you all heard the news? Mr. Blackwell has a secret daughter who is adorable. It shows that one's appearance plays a significant role when choosing a husband. After all, we must ensure a worthy legacy for the next generation."

"I witnessed it as well! Mr. Blackwell's patience and devotion to his daughter are truly heartwarming. The sight of them together creates a poignant scene that resonates deeply. The little girl's infectious laughter has a way of touching one's soul. I can't help but feel a twinge of envy for whoever is blessed with such happiness. Not only is his daughter beautiful and endearing, but Mr. Blackwell exudes an irresistible charm."

"Well, we can only marvel and be envious. Men like him, who possess both looks and wealth, are rare and seem unattainable to us mere mortals."

Initially, Natalie diligently washed her hands, paying little attention to the buzz surrounding the trending topics. She had never been one to meddle in others' personal lives, knowing well that such trends often held little truth. Only the individuals involved truly knew the reality of their circumstances.

However, upon catching snippets of sensitive keywords like "Mr. Blackwell" and "daughter," she couldn't resist a tinge of curiosity and an inkling of apprehension.

She reached for a tissue, gently dried her hands, and casually initiated a conversation, "Which Mr. Blackwell are you referring to in these trending topics?"

The doctors engaged in gossip regarded Natalie with an almost incredulous gaze as if questioning her awareness of the world. Yet, they kindly explained, “Dr. Foster, are you unfamiliar with Hackett, the esteemed Mr. Blackwell of Athana? He’s the fantasy of many young ladies.”

Natalie’s immediate thought went to Sherri....

The female doctor continued her chatter, “Although Mr. Wilson and Mr. Roberts are quite dashing in their own right, they exude an air of aloofness, making it hard to connect with them. In contrast, Mr. Blackwell carries a warm presence and appears much more approachable”

Natalie didn’t feel like continuing the conversation with her colleagues. She discarded her gown into the recycling bin and hurriedly returned to her office in the inpatient department.

Before reaching her office, she took out her phone and opened the trending topics website. She was immediately greeted with multiple photos capturing the interaction between Ruby and Hackett. The photographer skillfully framed their faces together, showcasing their identical smiles and features. Even at a glance, Natalie could quickly tell that Ruby was Hackett’s daughter, and she was sure others would recognize it too.

Countless suspicions raced through her mind. Why would Hackett spend time with Ruby? Could he have discovered the truth?

Her suspicions grew stronger with each passing moment. Hackett wasn’t the type to casually spend a whole day playing with an unrelated little girl. There had to be a reason for his actions.

Lost in her thoughts, her pondering was abruptly interrupted by her phone buzzing. Without a second thought, she answered the call, knowing it was Sherri on the other end. “Hello, have you seen the trending topics?”

Sherri was seething with anger on the other end of the line. “Do you think he deliberately exposed Ruby as his daughter just to mess with me? Is he out of his mind, putting Ruby in the public eye on the internet?”

Natalie shared a different sentiment. Protecting their children should always be a priority regardless of how adults behave. The online world was filled with irrational fans, and it was better to err on caution.

Natalie suggested, “Why don’t you call Juana first and ask why Ruby was with Hackett? It’s possible that the situation isn’t what we initially thought.”

Sherri realized her anger had clouded her judgment and agreed, “You’re right. I’ll make the call now.”

After ending the call, Sherri immediately dialed Juana’s number. “Mom, did you take Ruby to meet Joy yesterday?” Sherri spoke politely, attempting to be more composed after their previous disagreement.

Juana’s voice was filled with excitement on the other end, saying, “Yes, Joy adores little Ruby. We went shopping together yesterday. Let me tell you, Hackett is incredible with kids. While we were out, he cared for Ruby alone, and they had a wonderful time.”

Sherri pressed her temples, feeling the pounding headache intensify. Could things get any worse? The entire online world praised that man, and Juana irresponsibly thrust Ruby into the spotlight. She berated herself for not leaving Ruby with Natalie the first time Juana introduced her to Joy.

It was a hasty decision.

Without a doubt, Hackett knew the truth. Why else would he willingly involve himself in caring for Ruby? It was evident that he was aware of their connection.

Sherri let out a weary sigh, her voice tinged with frustration. "Alright. Mom, I have to go. I still have work to do."

Juana was left bewildered by the abrupt end of the call, shaking her head at her phone's blank screen. Sherri's constant distractions and restless demeanor perplexed her.

After hanging up, Sherri didn't reach out to Natalie. Instead, fueled by anger, she removed Hackett from her neglected. blocklist. She dialed his number with fiery determination, hoping for a response. But the phone continued to ring unanswered, intensifying her frustration to the point where she contemplated hurling her phone across the room.

At that moment, Sherri had only one thought in her mind. Just pick up, damn it!

Despite making multiple attempts, each call went unanswered. Evidently, he was sound asleep, leading Sherri to retrieve her blocked contacts on WhatsApp and launch a barrage of voice messages, one after another.

Meanwhile, Hackett lay undisturbed in a deep slumber, oblivious to the constant ringing of his phone. Eventually, the persistent stream of voice messages roused him from his sleep. Annoyed and disoriented, he fumbled for his phone under his pillow and checked the caller ID. He couldn't believe his eyes. Wasn't this the woman who had recently blocked him?

Taking a moment to gather his thoughts, he answered the call in a casual yet groggy tone, his voice carrying a trace of sleepiness. "Are you calling to express gratitude for the flowers I sent you this morning?"

Sherri's gaze fell upon the fresh bouquet in the corner, fueling her anger. She marched over and delivered two swift kicks to the flowers, her frustration boiling. "Hackett, you better remove that trending topic immediately!"

Hackett, caught off guard by her outburst, responded with confusion, "What trending topic are you referring to?"

Sherri was convinced he was feigning ignorance, deliberately provoking her to seek his attention. "Don't play dumb with me! You know exactly what I'm referring to! Did you have to exploit Ruby in the public eye? Our matters should be dealt with privately, without involving an innocent child."

Hackett awakened early in the morning and, now facing her wrath, felt a surge of bewilderment and frustration. His thoughts became muddled as he retaliated, "Sherri, I haven't even had the chance to settle the score with you. How dare you take Ruby and flee to another country? How am I supposed to resolve this matter?"

Sherri was taken aback, realizing that Hackett indeed knew the truth. Without a doubt, he was responsible for this whole situation. "Hackett, you're completely out of your mind! That is my daughter, not yours!"

Hackett fired back, his tone filled with anger. "Without my contribution, you couldn't have created such a remarkable child. What are you even thinking?"

Sherri, overwhelmed with anger, abruptly ended the call. Tears welled up in her eyes, streaming down her cheeks. She felt a sense of panic, unsure of what to do next. Would Hackett fight for custody of their child? Should she prepare for a legal battle?

She hadn't even had the chance to inform Juana, and now it seemed like everything was exposed.

Hackett, on the other hand, began to regret his impulsive response. He had planned to approach the situation calmly and gradually lead her to acknowledge the truth. But in a moment of weakness, he had lost control. Little did he expect that

Sherri would readily admit to their

She mentioned trending topics, prompting his curiosity to open the website. Surprisingly, he discovered numerous videos capturing the joyous moments he shared with Ruby, showcasing Ruby's face to the world.

The surge of anger within him reached its peak, clouding his thoughts.

Meanwhile, at the Wilson Group, Jim, stationed in the bustling secretary department, stumbled upon a bombshell as soon as he arrived in the morning. Lately, he had been feeling his inner composure slipping away. Just when Mr. Wilson had instructed him to prepare women's attire, news broke out that Mr. Blackwell's secret daughter had exploded into the public sphere. And the twist of fate: The little girl turned out to be none other than Mrs. Wilson's daughter.

How was he to approach Mr. Wilson about this delicate matter? Standing at the entrance, Jim hesitated, struggling to find the right words.

After much deliberation, he mustered the courage to open the door and enter. Mr. Wilson, as always, donned his impeccably tailored black suit, his strong hands clutching a sleek black pen as he swiftly signed a stack of documents. His face remained stoic, concealing any hint of emotion. Jim, steeling

himself, finally said, "Mr. Wilson, there's breaking news this morning regarding Mrs. Wilson's daughter. A revelation that she is, in fact, the illegitimate child of Mr. Blackwell."

Trevor's grip tightened around the pen, freezing mid-air, while a glint of icy fury flickered in his eyes. "What are you insinuating? Are you telling me that her daughter is Hackett's? The implications sank deep, suggesting an intimate

relationship between Natalie and Hackett.

Jim pressed on. "Yesterday, Mr. Blackwell was photographed with Mrs. Wilson's daughter at the amusement park. The photos have made quite a splash on trending topics today. Would you like to take a look? He observed Trevor's face intently, awaiting his reaction.

Trevor, still perplexed, keyed in the website address and hesitantly clicked the mouse button. Instantly, images of Hackett and Ruby flooded the screen. Ruby's beaming smile radiated joy, and Hackett appeared equally delighted. Trevor scrutinized the photos, and after a lingering moment, a smile broke across his

face Jim felt a shiver run down his spine, but he dared of question Mr Wilson about the ons behind his amusement.

“I’ll head home on my own tonight, Jim You don’t need to drive me Trevon stated abruptly as he shut down the computer.

Jim nodded, a sense of bewilderment washing over lum The recent actions of Mr Wilson had been nothing short of peculiar, leaving Sum puzzled and curious about the underlying circumstances.

[Chapter 148](#)

Hackett wasted no time dialing Frank’s number after hanging up the phone. The phone rang for an eternity before a raspy voice answered, “Hackett, do I owe you something? Did I disturb your peace?”

Calling him every morning was driving him insane. Didn’t he realize that Frank ran a bar and kept late hours? He needed to find a way to teach this guy a lesson.

Hackett forcedly smiled as he replied, “Bro, I need your help. Name your price, and help me eliminate the trending topics.”

Still with his eyes closed, Frank kept the speaker on, sounding rather nonchalant, “Which celebrity is it this time? Isn’t it a common occurrence? Just ignore it.”

Hackett felt the urgency mounting, worried that with each passing minute, the photos of Ruby would be further circulated. “No, it’s more complicated this time. Please, do me a favor and take care of it. Name your price, and I’ll agree to it.”

Suddenly, Frank opened his eyes, curiosity gleaming in his gaze. He wanted to see what could make Hackett go to such lengths and offer any price to seek his assistance. “Don’t go back on your word now.”

The tone of Frank carried a clear sense of threat, leaving Hackett no choice but to pay a hefty price. Money couldn’t outweigh the safety and well-being of Ruby, who was undeniably adorable and innocent. Protecting her from any harm was his utmost priority.

With unwavering resolve, Hackett asserted, “No backing out. I urgently need your help, my friend. Take down the trending topics and use your technical expertise to track down those who downloaded the photos. I want them exposed and every single picture erased. Not a trace should remain.”

Frank hadn’t seen the trending topics yet, but he couldn’t help but speculate, “Did they capture compromising photos of

you

Hackett reminded himself to stay composed. He needed to maintain a respectful demeanor while seeking assistance, despite the overwhelming urgency he felt. “No, first take a look at the trending topics.”

“Alright. I’ll hang up now. Just remember to honor your promise once this is resolved.”

“I understand. I won’t go back on my word.” Hackett would have been more cautious in the past, constantly negotiating terms before agreeing to anything. But this time, he unconditionally accepted Frank’s help without any conditions being mentioned.

Frank opened his phone with a frustrated expression, taking a closer look at the pictures. Goodness gracious, it was none other than Trevon’s ex–wife’s daughter. How did she end up having such a blast with Hackett?

Examining the photos more closely, all traces of confusion vanished from Frank’s face, replaced by an irrepressible grin. Instead of immediately tending to Hackett’s requests, he saved all the photos from the trending topics to his phone’s gallery. Without delay, he got serious and turned on his computer, ready to take action. In no time, all traces of the trending topics disappeared. Following that, several phones were hacked, including Natalie’s.

Inside the office, Natalie furrowed her brow as she stared at her mysteriously blacked–out phone screen. Had it been infected with a virus? She hadn’t watched any questionable videos, only anatomy lessons from reputable websites.

But within a few seconds, her phone’s brightness returned, alleviating her fears of a virus. She unlocked her phone one by one, checking each app. The money in her online banking app was still there, relieving her Next, she checked her notes and, finally, her photo gallery. To her dismay, the last saved photos of Hackett and Ruby were gone. Opening her chat records with Sherri on WhatsApp, she realized the missing photos.

Therefore, the primary objective was the photos.

Unwilling to accept defeat, Natalie reopened the trending topics page, only to find it empty. There was no trace of the bustling scene that had unfolded earlier that morning. It seemed as if the trending topics had never even existed. Sherri must have enlisted the services of a highly skilled individual to not only delete the saved photos but also erase any evidence of their viral presence.

Natalie had never ventured into the realm of hacking or programming, but she was familiar with the concept through her cousin Ava. Ava had a penchant for infiltrating others’ computer systems, especially when Joseph provoked her. Joseph had been forced to fortify his devices with multiple layers of advanced security measures to protect himself from Ava’s relentless hacking attempts.

However, Ava was not entirely reckless in her pursuits. She refrained from tampering with Joseph’s work computer, instead focusing on his phone and the family computer.

Judging by the sophistication of today’s cyber–attacker, it was clear that they were a highly skilled individual. If Ava were to discover their exploits, she would undoubtedly see it as a challenge and seize the opportunity to demonstrate her prowess. Natalie dialed Sherri’s number from her contacts, eager to share the news that all the information had been successfully deleted. However, she knew that memories couldn’t be erased, a fact they couldn’t control. “I’ve checked the trending topics, and they’ve all been taken down. The photos I saved on my phone are gone too. It seems someone hired a skilled hacker to do the job. Have you spoken to Hackett?”

Sherri, also at the inpatient department, sighed heavily and rested her cheek against her hand. “Yeah, I talked to him. We exchanged some heated words. He knows the truth about our daughter.”

Natalie wasn't surprised by the revelation. When she saw the photos, she had already anticipated this outcome.

"You're worried that he might try to take Ruby away from you, aren't you?" Natalie empathized.

Sherri replied with a solemn tone, "Yeah, I am."

"Well, it's not necessarily the case. You have yet to have a proper conversation with him, so how can you be sure he would try to take her away from you? Besides, it doesn't seem like Hackett orchestrated the trending topics incident. After all, he would save hiring someone to take down the trending topics. He's a real estate developer, not someone well-versed in programming. Please don't worry about this prematurely. I suggest you confide in Juana about this matter."

Sherri let out a weary sigh. "I've been thinking about that too. It's disheartening that the people I least wanted to know about it now have all the information. There's no point in keeping it from Juana any longer. I'm trying to figure out how to approach her, and the same goes for Edward. He asked me before about the father, and I vehemently denied knowing."

She pondered the idea of coming clean tonight. After all, Edward was currently overseas, so the immediate repercussions would be minimal. It seemed like the right course of action, and after discussing it with Natalie for a few minutes, she felt a sense of relief.

She added humorously, "My daughter is stunning, and it feels like a waste of my genes if there aren't any scandals surrounding her."

Natalie couldn't help but laugh at Sherri's remark. "Is that face a reflection of your genes? Are you sure you're not mistaken?"

"Oh, come on! Can't we have a normal conversation without you teasing me?"

"Alright, but it doesn't change the truth." In reality, Natalie shared the same concerns. While Sherri's child was registered under her name to divert attention, now that Hackett knew about it, it wouldn't be long before Trevon discovered their child was his. Would he try to claim the child from Sherri?

However, she chose not to divulge the situation to Sherri then. Sherri was already agitated and didn't want to add to her troubles. Instead, she decided to take it one step at a time and handle each development as it unfolded. After all, goes, "Cross the bridge when you come to it."

as the

saying

On the other hand, Hackett dialed Sherri's number, having witnessed all the trending topics being taken down. Unsurprisingly, the call was promptly disconnected, and he was placed on her blacklist. A mechanical voice echoed through the line, leaving him to send her an SMS message instead. "My dear, it wasn't me who orchestrated the trending topics, but I did invest a considerable sum to have them taken down. Can you please remove me from your blacklist?"

He couldn't help but feel frustrated. He had previously mocked Trevon Wilson for not having Sherri's number, and now he found himself in the same situation. He couldn't afford for Trevon to find out about this situation. He dreaded the potential ridicule he would face.

Sherri received the message but had no intention of responding. She swiftly deleted it and placed her phone face down on the table. Hackett's plea to be removed from the blacklist seemed far-fetched to her. She wasn't about to easily forgive and forget his actions.

A nurse approached her with genuine concern. "Dr. Landor, is everything okay? Are you feeling unwell? Did someone upset you?"

Sherri smiled strained and replied, "Oh, it's nothing. Just had a little encounter with a naughty dog"

The nurse looked puzzled, unable to fully grasp Dr. Landor's sense of humor. However, seeing that Dr. Landor could crack a joke, the nurse assumed everything was fine.

Sherri noticed the nurse standing there, looking a bit bewildered. "It's nothing. I'm just not fully awake yet. I stayed up late last night binge-watching a TV series."

"Oh, I understand. I've come across a fantastic show recently. I'm not a TV enthusiast, but this one is truly captivating. Would you like me to recommend it to you, Dr. Landor?"

Sherri's interest was piqued. Lately, she had been longing for an engaging TV series. "Really? What's the drama called?"

Excitedly, the nurse replied, "The Legend of the White Snake Lady."

Sherri's expression froze momentarily. Why didn't you recommend 'Empresses in the Palace'? You're not well-versed in TV dramas. That one is a true masterpiece.

The nurse misunderstood Sherri's reaction and assumed she didn't like that kind of drama. "Oh, Dr. Landor, you're not into that genre?"

Sherri cleared her throat and responded, "Well, I'll check it out when I get home. Thanks for the suggestion."

The nurse assumed Sherri was also interested and smiled, saying, "No problem! It's always fun to share great shows with others, don't you think?"

After leaving the Wilson Group, Trevon headed straight to the Lither Club to find Frank. To his surprise, Frank was already

up and about when he pushed open the office door. Trevon had expected to go to Frank's room to hurry him along.

"The Lither Club wasn't open last night?"

Frank, with his legs propped up on the desk, contemplated what kind of reward he should ask for from Hackett. He absentmindedly toyed with his phone, responding, "The early bird catches the worm."

Trevon gave him a skeptical look as if silently questioning the truth behind Frank's words. He calmly took a seat on the sofa. "Starting today, I need you to disable the surveillance cameras at Evergreen Gardens every night at 11:30"

Frank smirked, his lips curling in a sly smile as he locked eyes with Trevon. “If you want to play the sneak, you better think twice about Natalie’s lofty residence on the 25th floor. Can you even scale that high when the Turner family’s bodyguard guards the entrance?”

Trevon casually lit a cigarette, crossing his legs with an air of nonchalance as he released a slow stream of smoke. “If I want it blacked out, it’ll be blacked out. Save your breath and get to the point.”

Frank, with a hint of amusement, took an unlit cigarette and placed it between his lips. With a mischievous glint, he reached for his phone and addressed Trevon, “Got a little gift for you.” Without hesitation, he sent him the entire collection of saved photos.

With a distinct chime, Trevon opened WhatsApp, his demeanor unexpectedly calm. He leisurely glanced at the photos, and to Frank’s surprise, a faint smile graced his lips. “Seems like Hackett has quite a resemblance.”

Observing Trevon’s composed reaction, Frank realized that he had likely already seen the trending topics earlier that morning “So, it appears my efforts were in vain, wasting valuable memory. Tell me, who were you planning to scale the wall for? Natalie or...?”

Trevon remained in high spirits as he leisurely indulged in his cigarette, paying no heed to Frank’s jibes. He reclined on the sofa with an air of nonchalance, exhaling wisps of smoke that danced gracefully.

[Chapter 149](#)

The heavens seemed to conspire against her. The morning had been sunny, but a fine drizzle began to fall as Natalie prepared to leave work. She had arrived on her motorbike, and now the weather mirrored the temperament of a particular person she couldn’t help but think of, which was ever-changing, like the shifting hues of the sky.

Shaking her head, she wondered if she had been bombarded with too many messages from him lately. How else could his name have sprung to mind in this way?

She glanced at the overcast sky and reassured herself that it was just a drizzle. It shouldn’t drench her like an unfortunate soul.

Once she hopped on her bike, she accelerated, swiftly maneuvering through the ceaseless flow of vehicles. However, the rain proved uncooperative, showing no mercy to her unprotected state. In an instant, a deluge poured down without warning

Completely drenched, her phone vibrated in her pocket. From the corner of her eye, she noticed a white Toyota slowly drawing closer. She slowed down and stole a glance. It was Ethan, Joseph’s bodyguard, who pulled up alongside her. Stepping out of the car, he propped open an umbrella that shielded Natalie’s head. The rain poured down mercilessly, instantly soaking him through “Miss, please get in the car. Allow me to drive you back. It’s too dangerous in this deluge”

Ethan couldn’t help but worry about the consequences if something went wrong, and he couldn’t report back to Mr. Turner. The safety of Miss Natalie was paramount to him. Protecting her was why he had been assigned to the bustling capital of Athana.

Natalie's clothes were now drenched, making it impractical for her to get into the car. She didn't want to soil the seats either. It seemed like she had already taken the hit of getting wet, so she decided against involving another person in her soggy situation. She figured a hot shower at home would ward off any chances of catching a cold.

With that decision in mind, she politely declined Ethan's kind offer. "You two should hop in the car. I'm already soaked, and it's just a short distance from home. Let's not stand around chatting. Still wearing a concerned expression, Ethan dutifully held the umbrella for Natalie..

Noticing Ethan's lingering worry, she smiled. "Trust me. I'm a doctor. We should get going now. If we wait any longer, I might catch a cold."

Knowing Natalie's reluctance to inconvenience them and her stubborn nature, Ethan reluctantly got into the car and started the engine, following closely behind her.

Unbeknownst to Ethan, the heavy rain prevented him from noticing the black car trailing them from behind.

As the sleek black Maybach glided past them, a hint of displeasure flashed in the man's eyes. This woman was utterly drenched, rainwater flowing down her cheeks like an unrelenting cascade.

Jim glanced at the frigid figure seated in the back. His voice tinged with concern. "Mr. Wilson, it seems Mrs. Wilson has been completely drenched"

The man remained silent at first but finally spoke up as the car fell into a peaceful stillness. "Do you think I'm blind?"

Jim was left speechless. Who had managed to provoke him this time? He had merely wanted to offer a well-intentioned reminder. "Of course not."

Silence fell upon them, and Trevon turned his gaze to the pounding rain outside, his mind filled with images of a woman thoroughly doused by the downpour. A vexing restlessness tugged at his heart.

Why hadn't she bothered to check the weather forecast?

As Natalie stepped through the door, her clothes were soaked, water dripping from them without a need for wringing. Lena was taken aback. "Miss Natalie, how did you get drenched on your way home? We are here to take care of Jasper. You could have hailed a taxi or waited at the hospital. It would be best if you didn't come back to this state. The current weather is a breeding ground for catching a cold."

Jerury swiftly fetched a blanket from the bathroom and draped it over Natalie. "Hurry to your room and take a hot bath. Let the warmth chase away the chill from your body. I've already started filling the bathtub with hot water."

Natalie smiled and nodded. "Understood. Thank you, Lena. Let me take a quick bath before I come to hold you, Jasper. Lena. I might leave some water stains as I walk in. Could you kindly wipe them?"

Lena playfully scolded, "What are you saying, you uly child? Go on now?"

Natalie hurried, smiling at Jasper before entering the master bedroom

Stepping into the bathroom, she found the bathtub, almost filled with water. Setting aside the mat, she turned off the faucet. The water was a touch warmer than usual, likely Lena's way of ensuring she would feel cozy. Indeed, Natalie's body felt a slight chill, courtesy of the cool rainwater outside.

She discarded her drenched clothes and eased herself into the inviting warmth of the water. It enveloped her, instantly soothing her senses. She savored the comforting temperature with half-closed eyes, though faint dizziness washed over her. As a doctor, her first instinct was that she might have caught a chill.

After soaking for around ten minutes, the water temperature in the bathtub began to cool. Natalie emerged and proceeded to get dressed, feeling a slight lightheadedness. She quickly donned a bathrobe, realizing she couldn't sleep with Jasper tonight. She didn't want to risk infecting him if she had caught something.

The weather forecast had clearly predicted an overcast day, so why was it raining? It was frustratingly unreliable.

She intended to put on some clothes and search the medicine cabinet for cold medicine. However, a series of sneezes interrupted her plans. Natalie reached into a drawer and retrieved a mask, placing it over her face. With a sigh, she rose from her seat, cup in hand, and made her way to the kitchen to pour some water.

The water stains on the floor had already been diligently wiped clean by Lena. Natalie approached the kitchen, cup in hand. "Lena, let Jasper sleep with you tonight. It seems I've caught a cold."

Lena expressed her concern. "Don't worry about Jasper. We'll take good care of him. How are you feeling? Have you taken any medicine? Should we consider going to the hospital?"

Feeling the warmth in her heart from Lena's continuous concern, Natalie raised the cup, signaling she was about to pour water. Lena noticed Natalie was already taking medication, putting her worries at ease.

Jenny began to persuade Jasper. "Jasper, Mommy isn't feeling well. Let's not disturb her tonight and allow her to rest. You can sleep with Grandma, and I'll tell you a delightful bedtime story."

Understanding the situation, Jasper obediently agreed. With the weekend approaching, one night of rest should be enough for Natalie to recover.

Natalie felt her body burning like a furnace in the early morning hours. She realized there was only cold medicine at home and no fever-reducing medication. Despite her usually robust health, experiencing fever no more than twice a year, she hadn't developed the habit of keeping fever reducers on hand. She tried to check the time on her phone but could not even open her eyes. Each breath she exhaled felt scorching hot, and she knew she had a fever and a significant one at that.

At this point, the only option was to receive an intravenous saline solution. Struggling with all her might, she retrieved her phone and glanced at the time. It was already the early hours of the morning. She had no choice but to disturb Ethan, dialing his number. On the other end of the line, she heard a respectful voice say, "Miss Natalie, are you feeling unwell?"

Unbeknownst to Natalie, Ethan White hadn't actually dozed off. Aware that she had been caught in the rain earlier and concerned about her potentially falling ill, he had chosen to remain awake, stationed in the car downstairs, awaiting her call

Natalie, mustering every ounce of her strength, slowly uttered, "Get a doctor. I have a fever."

Ethan wasted no time. He immediately dialed the number of the director at Athana Hospital, regardless of whether the director was asleep. The principle was simple when Miss Natalie fell ill, it was a matter of utmost importance.

The director's phone number was a direct line that Ethan had established upon his arrival in Athana. Given their line of work, it was a precautionary measure, which involved frequent injuries and unpredictable accidents.

Little did he anticipate that this connection would be used for the first time, solely for the sake of Miss Natalie.

The doctor arrived promptly, accompanied by a mature-looking middle-aged man. Walking alongside him was a tall girl in a flowing black dress, with the length concealing her bare feet. Despite that, glimpses of her oversized shoes were visible as she walked. Her ebony tresses cascaded down, partially obscuring half of her face. She wore a loose-fitting trench coat over her dress, giving her a somewhat androgynous appearance.

The tall woman, partially concealed by a mask, left Ethan with a hint of curiosity due to her height and shoe size. However, her precisely shaped eyebrows and long lashes framed captivating eyes. The faint glimmer of crystal earrings peeking through the dim light dissolved any lingering doubts in Ethan's mind.

Guided by Ethan, the two doctors stepped into the elevator. He pressed the button for the 25th floor, and the elevator ascended swiftly. Within moments, they arrived at the door. Ethan White gave a gentle reminder, "Please keep your voices down. There are sleeping elders and children inside."

The middle-aged doctor nodded in acknowledgment. "Of course. You needn't worry about my companion causing any

disturbance. She is a mute."

Ethan offered a sympathetic gaze toward the woman. Despite her imposing height and seemingly attractive features, it was a pity that she couldn't communicate verbally. His sympathy lingered for a moment before he led them inside.

[Chapter 150](#)

Entering the room, Ethan stood silently by the doorway, watching the two doctors examine Natalie. The doctor began by checking her temperature and reported, "39.5 degrees."

In the grip of a high fever, Natalie murmured incoherently, her words indiscernible. Ethan's anxiety grew, prompting him to ask, "How is she doing?"

The doctor replied honestly, advising. "Miss Natalie has a dangerously high temperature. She requires an intravenous saline solution. After administering the injection, I will have a nurse stay with her. As

both of us are males, it would be inappropriate to remain in the room. Furthermore, her inability to speak means she won't be disturbed.*

Ethan understood the reasoning. He could see Natalie's discomfort from his vantage point at the doorway. Her brow furrowed in pain. Recognizing his limitations as a male attendant, he realized it would be impractical for him to assist with tasks such as body care. If he attempted to do so, he could risk compromising his well-being for the following day. "In that case, please make yourselves comfortable on the living room sofa. Wait until Miss Natalie's temperature subsides, and then you can leave."

The doctor nodded in agreement, saying, "Very well, I will start the saline infusion. As he began the procedure, he instructed the mute nurse, "You can stay in the room and attend to her. Wipe her arms and forehead with a damp cloth to help lower her temperature and make her more comfortable. Her fever is quite high."

The tall nurse listened attentively, nodding in understanding. Satisfied with the plan, Ethan followed the doctor out of the room and closed the door behind them. The room became tranquil, leaving Natalie in the nurse's care.

By closing the door, Ethan intended to ensure privacy, especially if there was a need to attend to Natalie's physical needs.

The woman on the bed occasionally furrowed her brow and turned her head. Her murmured words were indiscernible. Her cheeks, flushed with fever, had resembled a delicate blush, revealing her discomfort. In response to her distress, the nurse entered the bathroom and filled a basin with warm water. She dipped a towel into the soothing liquid and gently wiped the woman's forehead. Her movements had been delicate and cautious, as if she had handled a fragile treasure with utmost care. Natalie's body radiated intense heat. In her search for comfort, she reached out her pristine arm. The nurse delicately clasped her tiny hand and offered a comforting grip. Starting from the wrist, she carefully wiped the arm, proceeding to the palm. Her gaze remained fixed on the woman lying on the bed, unwavering in her care. After the gentle wiping, she tucked Natalie's arm under the blanket, ensuring she was warmly wrapped.

After approximately half an hour, the saline solution began to take effect. The rosy flush on Natalie's cheeks gradually subsided, and the furrow between her brows relaxed slightly. With her eyes closed, she softly murmured words that were difficult to discern.

Drawing closer, the nurse reached out to arrange the stray strands of hair on Natalie's face. She gently smoothed the creased brow, soothingly whispering, "What do you need?"

Natalie found the voice peculiar yet strangely familiar in her fevered state. Although her mind was clouded, she struggled to make out the person before her. With effort, she half-squinted her eyes and repeated, "Water"

As the nurse prepared to fetch water from the kitchen, her gaze fell upon a hot water bottle on the bedside table.

Quickly grabbing a cup, the nurse filled it with water and placed it on the bedside table. Sitting by the edge of the bed, she carefully lifted Natalie's upper body and cradled her against her own. With a gentle

touch, she tidied the stray strands of hair from Natalie's forehead. She tenderly offered her the cup of water using her free hand, ensuring each movement was soft and delicate. However, in Natalie's groggy state, she only drank half of it, spilling the rest onto the bed, leaving a damp patch.

The nurse grew slightly anxious. Slowly lowering Natalie back onto the bed, she reached for a tissue and delicately wiped the corners of her lips. She then proceeded to dab away the damp spots on the sheets. Once the tasks were completed, her gaze returned to Natalie's face, noticing her slightly dry lips. Determined, she rose and opened the bedside drawer, searching for straw. To her disappointment, none could be found. Briefly pausing, she fixated on Natalie's parched lips before deciding.

She stood up and quietly locked the bedroom door. In the living room, Ethan immediately reacted to the sound, preparing to enter the master bedroom. The composed middle-aged doctor reassured him. "No need to be alarmed. We wouldn't be able to leave this room if we had any intentions My apprentice is simply assisting in physically cooling down Miss Natalie. Locking the door prevents an awkward situation for all of us. Let's remember, she is a woman, after all"

As the doctor's words sank in, Ethan hesitated momentarily before settling back into his seat. Yet, his gaze remained fixated on the door leading to the master bedroom

Inside the room, the nurse took a delicate sip from the water cup before settling on the edge of the bed. Leaning close, she pressed her chilled lips against Natalie's fevered ones. With gentle determination, she coaxed Natalie's mouth open. recognizing the source of relief Natalie responded, parting her lips willingly as the cool water trickled in. Once Natalie had taken her fill, the nurse took a sip, then leaned down again, sealing their lips together. The water flowed again, finding its way into Natalie's thirsty mouth. This cycle repeated five or six times until the drinking pace slowed, signifying a pause.

Carefully, the nurse retrieved a tissue and tenderly wiped away any lingering droplets from the corners of Natalie's lips. Her palm, broad and comforting, gently caressed Natalie's flushed cheek. A mix of reluctance, apology, and remorse shone through her eyes.

Finally, in a soft, remorseful voice, she whispered. "I'm sorry?"

The following morning, Natalie stirred from her slumber. The sunlight peeked through the partially drawn curtain a gentle glow across the room. Stretching her limbs lazily, she luxuriated in the revitalization her body was a contented sigh, she murmured. "Hmm..."

Her constitution had always been strong and her body had a remarkable ability to recover. As she raised her head, she noticed a faint mark on the back of her right hand—a needle prick. Had she had a benzo injection?

Sitting in bed, she adjusted the covers, trying to make sense of the events from the previous night. She vaguely remembered calling Ethan when she had a fever, but the details seemed hazy. She recalled glimpses of a man tending to her, offering water and whispering apologies in fragmented phrases. It all felt surreal, like fragments of a dream.

But the voice of the female doctor

A peculiar thought emerged, only to be swiftly dismissed

A sense of unease washed over her. Was there something wrong with her lately? How could the rearrain such thoughts

Once Natalie stretched and rose from the bed, she went to the wardrobe and selected a comfortable dress. As she emerged from the room and inquired. "Lena, is Jasper still asleep

Lena observed Natalie's complexion closely and nodded in approval. "Didn't want to disturb your rest, so I went downstairs for a stroll. Why don't you catch some more rest??"

"I'm feeling much better now, and I can't sleep any longer! Besides, she wasn't here to indulge in lazy mornings

Lena began to voice her concerns. "Last night, thanks to Mr. White's swift actions in calling the doctor your temperature had risen to nearly 40 degrees. I was truly alarmed when I heard about it. Mr. White stayed with you until 2:00 AM, only allowing the doctors to leave once your fever subsided. They endured the night at his insistence. The older doctor even stumbled a few times as he departed."

Natalie had yet to realize the gravity of the situation. The faint image of the female doctor resurfaced in her mind, leaving her with lingering questions. "There, two doctors came last night. Was there also a woman among them?"

Lena was an early riser, with age reducing her need for sleep. She had already prepared to call for a doctor, but then she saw another doctor, a remarkably tall woman. She must have been around 5'9" tall. She was even taller than Mr. White, and had a sturdy build. Mr. White thoughtfully arranged for a female doctor to take care of you. They didn't bother waking us two old folks. But Mr. White mentioned that the doctor is mute, which as

Lena's empathy for the mute nurse lingered in Natalie's mind, but she was preoccupied with her thoughts

Was the female doctor truly mute? But she distinctly heard an apology from her last night. Perhaps her fever had clouded

her senses

Suddenly, Natalie realized that she wouldn't confuse the genders, and Ethan was not one to fabricate stories. If she saw a woman, then it must be so. She had let her imagination run wild, but such a situation would never occur with Ethan as simply the ramblings of a fevered mind.

Meanwhile, in Sherri's room, she had spent the entire night contemplating her confession. Seated at the dining table, she absentmindedly fed Ruby, stealing occasional glances at Juara's face to gauge her reaction.

Sherri had mustered the courage to confess the previous night but ultimately decided against it.

he was here

Juara noticed Sherri's intense gaze and inquired. "What's on your mind? You were fixated on your father and now you're staring at me. If there's something you want to say, say it. I won't resort to violence

Sherri straightened her posture, summoning every ounce of resolve as if facing her deepest fears head-on. "Juana, I need to talk to you. You promise me you won't lash out at me, no matter what I reveal."

Juana shot her a disapproving look and nonchalantly peeled a tomato for Ruby. "I won't resort to violence, not even if you condone the most heinous crimes. So, tell me, what's the matter?"

With Juana's response, Sherri's newfound courage instantly evaporated, leaving her feeling dejected.

Observing Sherri's sad state, Juana softened her tone and gently probed, "Go ahead. I assure you I won't lay a hand on you. Tell me what's bothering you."

Sherri took a deep breath, closing her eyes briefly before mustering the courage to speak. "Ruby is my daughter": cautiously opened her eyes anxiously waiting for her mother's reaction.

To her surprise, Juana remained silent, leaving Sherri no choice but to repeat herself, her voice led with determination. "I'm sad, Ruby is my daughter."

Juana's patience wore thin as she responded with irritation. "I already know that. You've always called yourself her mother. Why bring it up now? And why hasn't Natalie come to pick up Ruby today?"

Juana couldn't help but feel puzzled by Natalie's absence, as she usually took Ruby home at this behavior.

Sherri couldn't believe Juana didn't grasp the weight of her words. "I mean, Ruby is my biological daughter, my granddaughter. I gave birth to her," she said with a surge of courage, raising her voice.

Sherri's declaration lingered in the air, enveloping the room in a tense and unsettling silence. Juana stood frozen, her initial shock rendering her momentarily speechless.

Seconds ticked by, and Ruby sat peacefully, obliviously enjoying her meal of tomato. Sherri anxiously stared at her mother. Their eyes locked in a tense gaze. Finally, Juana regained her composure and demanded, "Repeat it."

Sherri's voice quivered, her gaze averted downward, lacking the usual strength and conviction. "I... I'm the one who gave birth to Ruby,"