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"Understood." As a competent assistant, Horace had a sense of what his boss was thinking. Frankly,

Helen was quite a handful. It was due to her that his boss had several clashes with Ariana.

Horace walked to a corner and texted the driver. From the corner of his eye, he noticed the bouquet of

roses left behind on the chair.

"Boss, what should we do with these flowers?" Horace gestured toward the bouquet and asked.

Theodore tured his head and smiled. "No need for that. She doesn't actually like it, but she has to

pretend she does. It was difficult for her to force herself," Theodore murmured.

Horace sighed softly. He believed Ariana did appreciate the flowers. When she had received them, he

had clearly seen the joy in her eyes.

Now, Theodore and Ariana were at odds and misunderstanding each other. It was uncertain how long it

would take for them to reconcile.

The driver arrived shortly, and Horace ushered Theodore out of the restaurant.

The waitress removed the flowers as instructed. She carried the bouquet to the garbage area in the

back alley. Rather than tossing the flowers into the garbage truck, she approached the young woman in white who had been waiting at the corner for some time. "Miss Clarke, I've done as you asked. Here's what you wanted." Helen accepted the flowers from the waitress, extracted a substantial wad of cash from her purse, and handed it over. "Make sure you keep this a secret." The waitress's eyes sparkled at the sight of the money. "Don't worry. I guarantee I won't say a word to anyone." "Alright, you may leave now." Helen adjusted the brim of her hat, ensuring no one was around, and then retrieved a mini recorder from the flowers and discarded the bouquet in a nearby trash bin.

Back at the hotel, Helen played the recording, listening to Theodore and Ariana's conversation at the

restaurant. Jealousy twisted her features.

She was aware that Theodore treated Ariana differently, but she hadn't realized Ariana was so special to him that he could promise her the role of Mrs. Anderson. for the rest of her life.

Theodore was not one to make promises lightly. Once given, he would surely follow through. How

could Ariana, a girl from a declining family, capture Theodore's affection?

Helen resolved to act within the month. She couldn't let Theodore and Ariana be together after they

had time to think things over.

Additionally, she needed to uncover the details of the bet between Theodore and Jasper in the

recording.

In the hotel's top-floor presidential suite, Ariana set down her bag, intending to change and shower, but

discovered that all traces related to Theodore had vanished.

She couldn't help but marvel at Horace's speed and attention to detail. No wonder he was such a

competent assistant.

The presidential suite boasted seven spacious rooms.

Seated in the living room, Ariana felt a sudden emptiness. It was in complete contrast to when

Theodore was present. She found herself missing his presence.

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As she thought back to what Theodore had said earlier, disappointment began to creep in once again.

Now that his attitude toward their relationship was clear, she shouldn't miss him anymore.

She had to move on for her child's sake. If Theodore couldn't offer her love, how could he love their baby? Ariana closed her eyes in despair, resting her head on her knees. Her heart ached from the realization that she couldn't win Theodore's love. She regretted demanding an answer from him. Had she not asked, she might have clung to some positive expectations. Now that she had her answer, she felt as if she were trapped in a never-ending alley. Ariana didn't know how long she had been sitting there. Only when she felt cold that she realized it was late into the night. Ariana stood up, took a shower, and lay down on the bed. She tried hard to sleep, but the hurtful words from Theodore kept replaying in her mind, making it impossible for her to rest. Initially, she felt heartbroken, but as she continued to dwell on it, anger began to seep in. "Jerk! It doesn't matter if you don't love me. Plenty of others do."

Furiously pounding her pillow, she spoke to the baby in her womb. "He's a terrible father. He's

abandoned both of us." @ As she murmured to her unborn child, her phone rang. Ariana grabbed her phone and saw that it was a call from Sarah. She answered right away. "Beautiful girl, I miss you so much! Come and give me a kiss!" With enthusiasm, Sarah playfully flirted with her over the phone. Ariana indulged her, making a kissing sound. Sarah chuckled before turing serious. "I have fantastic news for you. My performance has caught the attention of the organizers, and they've given me more airtime." "That's amazing! Keep up the hard work, and I'll attend the event to support you!" Ariana was delighted to finally receive some positive news. Though they hadn't met in person, Ariana could tell from Sarah's voice that she was doing well. They caught up on each other's lives, discussing recent events. Eventually, Sarah sensed something was off with Ariana. She inquired, "What's bothering you? I can tell you're not happy."

Ariana hesitated for a moment before telling the events of the evening.

In the end, she sighed helplessly, "I don't understand why Theodore won't admit he has feelings for me, yet he refuses to let me go."

After contemplating for a while, Sarah proposed a theory. "Could it be that he's not refusing to admit it, but rather he doesn't understand his own feelings?" @

"How could such a wise man as Theodore fail to understand his own feelings?" In Ariana's opinion,

Theodore must understand. It couldn't be otherwise.

Sarah clicked her tongue and said, "Theodore has always been at the top of social classes, and there's nothing he can't get. People like him don't have the same way of thinking as ordinary people. He said he can give you everything but love. Perhaps the way he shows his love is by actually giving you everything!"

Ariana was confused by what Sarah said. "What do you mean by that? He doesn't love me."

"Don't be so blind. I think Theodore definitely has feelings for you," Sarah said quite confidently.

"I don't think that has anything to do with love. It's the same thing as someone developing feelings for a

puppy or kitten they'd raised for any length of time."

Ariana was adamant.

Sarah heaved a sigh and replied, "You shouldn't say such a thing. If Theodore heard that, he would be so furious that his face contorted."

"I don't care," Ariana said in a low voice. She actually hoped Thedore would be so angry that his whole

face would become twisted. In this way, he would be ugly and no one would like him, not even Helen.

Sarah was silent for a while. She quietly took off her facial mask and then sat up.

She said seriously, "Think about it for a second. Why would Theodore, a CEO, always stay with you all

day long?"

"I really don't know what he wants from me. I guess he is just bored and for him, I am just a way to kill

time." The thing was Ariana was still angry with Theodore, so she couldn't think properly.

Sarah sighed and insisted, "Fine, then think about what Theodore has done for you.

Tell me honestly, has he been good to you?"

Ariana thought for a while and said honestly, "He actually treats me very well..."

She recalled that in the past, Theodore was always cold to her and never liked to be around her. But

now, he was considerate and seemed to genuinely care for her. It seemed that he had changeda lot.

But he didn't seem to consider her to be very special.

For some reason, Ariana suddenly thought of Holden, the disfigured man with a strange temper.

They had only met a few times, but Holden did a lot for her. Not only did he save her life twice, but he

also bought Ariana one of her mother's belongings. When.

Sarah's daughter was lost, he helped them find her. Ariana even remembered the time he threw a big

firework display for her in the middle of the night.

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In fact, this stranger, who had only known her for a short time, cared more about her than Theodore.

Sarah was stunned. How could Ariana not realize that Theodore loved her? Sarah thought of

something and then asked another question. "Does Theodore know that you are pregnant now?"

"Not yet."

"Why don't you tell him? You won't be able to hide your pregnancy forever you know. By next month,

your belly would have gotten much bigger."

Sarah really didn't understand why Ariana chose to hide her pregnancy. The Anderson family was a big

family, and they must definitely attach great importance to their lineage. Having a baby was a happy event that had to be shared with family.

So why was Ariana hiding her pregnancy like this?

Ariana hesitated for a moment and finally decided to tell Sarah the truth. "Theodore once warmed me not to carry his child. He clearly told me that if I had the misfortune to get pregnant, he would ask me to have an abortion. That's why I didn't dare to tell him about it."

Sarah's expression changed drastically upon hearing Ariana's words. She almost sprang to her feet.

"Damn it! What kind of man is he? What a jerk! What does he mean by that? If he dared to say such words, it means he doesn't deserve you. Men are all really bad. You should divorce him as soon as possible. I am on your side now."

Ariana wanted to say something more, but Sarah interrupted her.

"Honey, I have something to deal with now. Don't overthink this matter, okay?

Maybe you're just in a bad mood now and I think being away from Theodore for a month will do you a lot of good."

Without giving Ariana the chance to say anything more, Sarah hung up the phone ina hurry.

Staring at the dark screen of her phone, Ariana thought about what Sarah said. She felt Sarah's words
made sense. She should focus on her work first. It would really help her a great deal to stay away from
Theodore for a while.

Tyler's acting was on the right track and everything was going in the right direction.

But Ariana knew that kind of drama couldn't make Tyler a great actor. If he wanted to be one, he had to draw up a long-term development plan.

The most important thing he needed was a good script, and the second was a good director.

Since Francis stopped making things difficult for Tyler, Ariana had gradually spent less time at the

For the past two days, she had been staying on the top floor of the hotel and didn't go out at all. She ordered takeout for meals and only went downstairs when Tyler needed her.

Today it was pouring rain, which gave Ariana one more reason not to go out.

filming site to watch Tyler.

She was dressed in loose clothing that kept her warm. She was eating an apple while looking at the resource list on her laptop.

This was the list of upcoming movies or TV series projects that Horace sent her the day before.

Although Theodore kept his word and didn't come to her, he sent Horace to help her and told her to let

Horace know if she needed anything.

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After two days here, she wasn't as sad as before, and she even felt uneasy thinking about her quarrel

with Theodore. She thought it was a little childish.

Ariana banged her forehead against the table and felt a headache. Now she was not only upset about

her relationship, but she was also confused and at a loss about her work.

She didn't know which projects to choose for Tyler. It was clear he wanted to be an actor, and she had

to find him acting roles in different types of projects.

When a famous director put together a project, he usually looked for actors who were not only talented,

but also experienced. It was most often actors with a certain seniority in the industry who got roles in

these kinds of projects. Tyler was still new to the entertainment business, and it was difficult for a

newcomer without a resume to be cast by famous directors.

Although he was talented in acting, he wasn't that good yet. It was true that there wasn't anything

wrong with his acting when he played alongside someone as stupid as Cole. However, if Tyler was to play alongside a senior actor or actress, he would be overshadowed.

Thinking of this, Ariana came to the conclusion that Tyler had better take one step after another if he wanted to make it to the top of the entertainment industry.

As for the low-budget web dramas...

Ariana sighed. She had read the scripts of various web dramas for two whole days, and they were basically vulgar and full of profanity. She couldn't choose any one of them.

Ariana scratched her messy hair and thought back to the scripts she had read over and over. She suddenly remembered the script someone had sent to Sarah before.

Her mood lit up all of a sudden and she quickly opened her email. Fortunately, the attached file hadn't expired and she could still open it.

She had just read it once and had loved it.

The script was about a mystery. Ariana had only received the synopsis as well as the first third of the story. It wasn't a big script, but it was still over three hundred pages. Although the script needed to be reviewed, the story and the dialogues were impressive.

After reading the script again, Ariana made up her mind to choose it for Tyler. It was just a low-budget suspense movie, and the director was not a big name, but that wasn't a big deal as the quality of the story accounted for 50% of the project's fate.

Ariana checked the date of the e-mail. Seeing it had been nearly three months since she had recieved it, she suddenly felt that there was no way she could land a role for Tyler. It had been a long time and the director must have already chosen the actors and perhaps even started shooting.

But even though she felt there was no hope, she still had to ask them. She couldn't give up until she was sure there wasn't any role in the movie for Tyler.

Having made up her mind, Ariana dialed the number on the e-mail.

After a long time, the phone was connected.

"Hello, who's that?" A deep man's voice rang out from the other end of the phone.

Ariana went straight to the point. "Hello, I want to ask if the movie 'The Missin®

Body' is still in need of actors. I received your script and after reading it, I enjoyed it.

It would be great if we could work together on this project."



Theodore.
Soon enough, she received information about Jayson on her phone.
A minor director with a degree from a lesser-known college, he had been in the industry for five years
and had only directed a handful of obscure web dramas.
Late last year, he founded a small studio. There were pictures of the establishment included in the
information.
Ariana quickly scanned the photos and read about the recent developments. Three months prior,
Jayson started recruiting actors for a script he claimed to have meticulously prepared for three years.
However, due to his low budget and his own lack of popularity, progress had been slow.
At a later time, without explanation, the studio shut down and some of the well-prepared staff were let
go, signaling the suspension of the project.
It appeared that the script Ariana had just read was the one Jayson had been diligently working on for
three years.
At that moment, Horace sent another message. "I discovered that Jayson is heavily in debt, and his
properties and vehicles are being sold at a discount."

With a general understanding of the situation, Ariana tracked down all the web dramas Jayson had directed.

She spent an entire day watching them.

The following day, Ariana called Horace once more and said, "I need to ask Jayson something, but I can't seem to reach him. Do you have any other ways to contact him?"

Horace seemed puzzled. "Why are you so insistent on connecting with this individual, Mrs. Anderson?

If you're looking for a good project for Tyler, I can help you get in touch with some talented up-and-

coming directors."

Although Horace could even call upon internationally renowned directors affiliated with the BRD Group to assist Ariana, he hesitated to mention this option. Such an excellent opportunity to impress Ariana was reserved for his boss.

He added, "If you truly value that script, I can ask the company to purchase it.

Jayson is in need of money right now, so he might be willing to sell it."

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Ariana declined, "It's not what you think. I was initially just intrigued by the script.

However, after closely examining Jayson's work last night, my curiosity about him grew.

"His work is genuinely fascinating." Horace sincerely complimented Jayson as well.

While investigating Jayson the previous day, he had briefly skimmed through his work.

It was clear that Jayson was incredibly inventive and possessed a unique, indefinable quality in his

filmmaking.

"That's why I want to speak with Jayson face to face. I won't know what's happening until 1 meet him.

As for any potential collaboration, we can discuss that after our conversation." After a brief pause,

Ariana continued, "If I truly decide to produce this movie, I'd still prefer Jayson as the director. There

may be countless exceptional directors, but only the creator of this work can accurately convey the teal

story and essence behind it. It's akin to raising a child."

"T understand. If you want to meet with him, I know a place where you might find him."

The private hospital of the city was bustling with people early in the morning, with the in-patient

department's corridors almost too crowded to navigate.

Amidst the commotion, a trolley chimed its way out of the elevator, propelled by a nurse in a blue

uniform, sporting an indifferent expression. The trolley was brimming with medicine and injection needles, headed toward the third ward of the corridor.

The door opened, and a woman's high-pitched scream assaulted the nurse's ears.

On the bed, a woman who had lost almost all her hair due to illness writhed in pain, her retching sounds reminiscent of death's scythe steadily hollowing her body.

The woman looked tired and emaciated. Despite this, traces of her former elegance were still visible in her refined features.

Beside the bed, a man was also in agony, witnessing his wife's condition that seemed worse than death. He attempted to console her with words, but they did nothing to alleviate her physical suffering.

With a glimmer of hope in his eyes, he asked the nurse with a sense of urgency, "Is there any other medication that can alleviate my wife's pain?"

The nurse set down the medicine and a bill and spoke in a flat tone. "Mr. Spears, you still have outstanding treatment and hospitalization fees that need to be paid before we can dispense any more medication. This is the last batch of medicine. If you wish to continue the treatment, you'll need to settle

your outstanding balance."

tomorrow, please leave the hospital."

"Please, make an exception. I'll be selling my house soon. As soon as I receive the funds, I'll pay the

bill." To prove his sincerity, the man even showed the nurse the property listing information.

The nurse furrowed her brow and impatiently replied, "In that case, come back to purchase the medicine once you've sold the property and cleared your debt. The hospital has already made numerous exceptions. We genuinely can't accommodate you this time. If you don't settle your debt by

The nurse sounded annoyed and was ready to leave. She pushed her trolley and added, "Also, a new patient will arrive soon and need the room. Since you have overdue fees, you'll have to move out of the room and spend the night in the corridor. I hope you can understand."

Jayson tried to plead further, but the nurse evaded him and left swiftly.

As he rushed out to find the nurse, Jayson heard a heavy noise from the ward, like the shattering of glass.

He felt a sudden knot in his chest and rushed back to the ward. There, he found his wife holding a broken glass shard to her wrist, ready to harm herself.

"Julissa, what are you doing?! Stop it!" Terrified, Jayson quickly restrained his wife.

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Julissa Spears sobbed in her husband's arms. "No, it's unbearable. Let me die. I'm beyond help.

Everything they've tried is useless."

nurse reentered, urging them to hurry.

Embracing his wife tightly, Jayson feared he would lose his love right then and there. Despondently, he said, "Don't lose hope. If you keep up with the treatment, you can recover. Please don't give up. We will have money once we sell the house."

"Let me go. I don't want to continue the treatment. Use the money from the house to produce the movie. That's been your dream for years, but it's been derailed because of me. I'll feel guilty even in death." Julissa's eyes filled with tears as she looked up at Jayson's tired face. She reached out and touched his face. Her hand was bruised and had needle marks from blood tests and infusions.

Unable to help himself, Jayson trembled. Lowering his head, he tenderly kissed his wife's forehead.

"Please, don't say that. I love you deeply. You mean everything to me. I want to be with you forever."

"Are you ready to leave? This ward will be needed soon. Move to the corridor quickly." The blue-clad

Upon hearing this, Julissa buried her face in Jayson's arms, sobbing anew. "No, I don't want to be seen like this in the corridor. I look so hideous. Please."

Jayson's heart ached, and his eyes reddened. Pleading with the nurse, he swallowed his pride.

"Please, make an exception. I'll find a way to pay the fees. Can you give me more time? Don't force my wife into the corridor. Please."

The nurse hesitated for a moment, and despite feeling sympathetic, she still couldn't offer a solution.

"The hospital made this decision. I can't do anything about it. Unless you can settle the bill…"

"The bill is paid. This ward and the patient's treatment fees are covered."

Suddenly, a clear female voice caught everyone's attention, and they turned to look toward the door.

Ariana stood there, having used her salary and the bonus earned from reviving Sarah's career to pay off all the debt Jayson owed the hospital.

Since the nurse had never seen Ariana before, she asked, "What's your relationship with the patient?"

"I'm Jayson's friend. I'm the one who paid all the medical fees. You can check that at reception." Ariana
gave the nurse a polite smile as she calmly walked into the ward.

The nurse still had doubts though. However, she chose not to ask more and left the ward.

Jayson's shoulders were slumped and he seemed to have no energy left in him.

Despite that, he picked up his wife and put her on the bed to rest.

Julissa was now too tired to struggle anymore. She remained still and just wept in a low voice.

Holding her hand, Jayson stayed beside her to comfort her.

"Jayson, I'm so sorry. You're in this situation because of me. I'm so useless. How can I get ill like this?

Just forget about me and go live your own life. You should be chasing your dreams instead of taking

care of me." With her eyes closed, Julissa sobbed and begged Jayson to leave her alone in a

miserable voice.

However, Jayson had no intention of abandoning his wife and he comforted her gently, "It's okay.

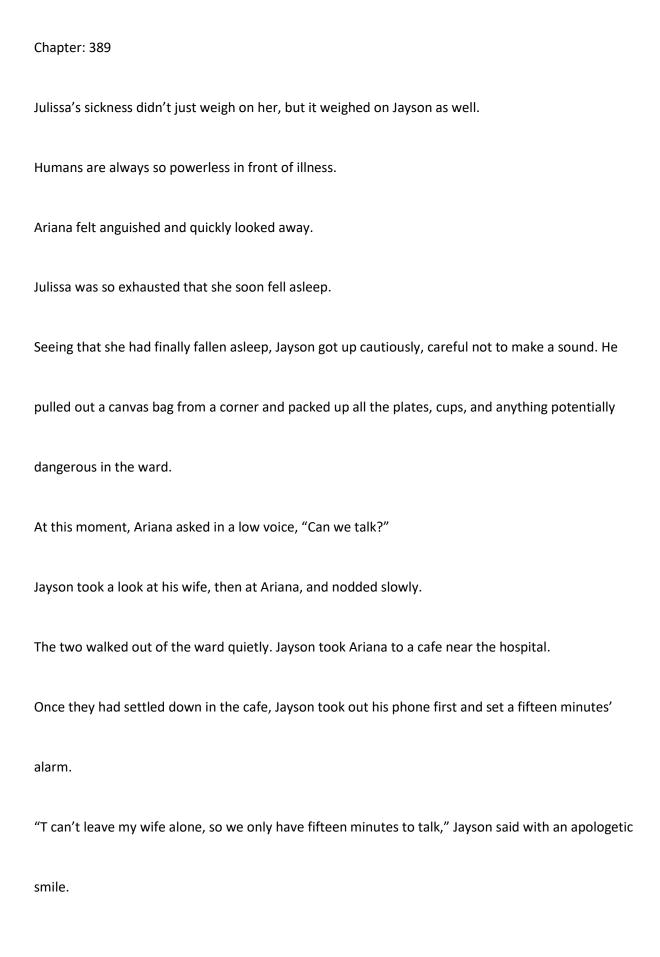
Everything will be okay. It won't hurt anymore when you wake up.

Stop saying such things okay? You are not a burden to me. My only dream now is to help you get

better. Please don't give up."

Meanwhile, Ariana was standing in the corner, waiting quietly. Before she came here, Horace had told

her the situation might not be good, but it turned out to be way worse than she had expected.



Ariana noticed that his eyes were bloodshot, which proved how exhausted he was.

He was just thirty years old. That was the age at which most young men began to build their future. Yet

fate had played a trick on him.

Ariana felt so sorry for Jayson. She introduced herself, "I'm Ariana Edwards, Sarah's agent. I called you

yesterday."

Jayson remembered her at once. "It's you! I didn't expect you to come here in person."

"Well, Mr. Spears, I needed to have a face-to-face discussion with you about the script and shooting."

Ariana paused and took a sip of milk, wondering how to persuade Jayson to carry on with the shooting.

"you're in the same company as Jasper, but I kinda get the feeling you two are rivals, am I right?"

Jayson inquired abruptly.

Ariana was stunned. Why did he mention Jasper all of a sudden?

Jayson glanced out of the window and murmured to himself, "I guess you are here to buy the script The

Missing Body, right?"

"Why are you so certain that I came here to buy the script?" Ariana asked with a frown. She felt there

were probably a lot of people who came here to ask Jayson to sell the script to them.

Jayson sneered, "If that wasn't the case, you wouldn't have bothered to come here.

It's not like you wanted me to be the director of the movie."

Ariana did want him to direct the movie. However, before she could reply, he went on, "I can sell it to you for two hundred thousand dollars. Regarding the team I gathered before, I can help you contact them if you need. You just have to find another director."

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Ariana was perplexed by Jayson's attitude. She stopped him and asked the question he had just dodged. "What makes you think that I'm here to buy the script? Did anybody want to do that already?" Repulsed, Jayson answered, "Absolutely! Jasper offered to purchase the script from. me two months ago, but I turned him down."

Ariana became serious when she heard that. She was caught off guard when Jayson said that Jasper had contacted him about it. Given his ambition, she assumed Jasper only preferred popular movies because they made good money. It turned out that he was interested in the same script as Ariana.

"You and Jasper are agents of the same firm. Besides getting the script, why else would you need to

see me? You two are competitors, so naturally, you want to get what your rival doesn't or won't get."

Jayson was not the least bit shocked. He even considered Ariana and Jasper to be the same kind of people with the same goal.

Ariana collected herself and answered, "Although I like the script itself, Mr. Spears, I admire your talent much more. Plus, I had no idea that Jasper had stopped by to see you before."

If Ariana had only read the script without knowing more about Jayson beforehand, it was possible that her visit was for the same reason he assumed; to purchase the script.

But after studying his earlier works, she changed her mind and was certain that Jayson would be the perfect director for this movie.

"you admire my talent?" Jayson didn't exhibit a lot of change in his demeanor. He just forced a smile.

"Please don't flatter me. I'm not even close to being a good director. For the last five years, I've been in

the workforce, and all I've produced are duds. You need not use such honeyed words."

"Mr. Spears, you don't need to lower yourself to that level. Your artistic abilities are clearly shown in your creations." Knowing that Jayson was on high alert, Ariana stopped speaking any formal rubbish and began giving her critique on all of his works.

The initial motivation for Ariana's interest in Jayson's works was purely strategic; she hoped that by learning more about him through them, she would have greater leverage in any future negotiations.

After reading all of his works, though, Ariana couldn't shake the thought that this man's accomplishments were underrated.

"The film language and narrative modes you use in your works clearly show your talent. Even if you call it bad, it still would not erase the time and attention you've put into each of your works. Your skills shouldn't be disregarded, in my opinion."

Jayson's demeanor changed somewhat when he heard this. From that point, he started taking Ariana more seriously.

Ariana said with a bright gleam in her eye, "Mr. Spears, I feel like I put in a lot of prep work for this meeting. I hope you'll see it as evidence of my sincerity. I really hope that we can work together. 'The Missing Body' is a good script. When I first read the script, I immediately saw its commercial potential."

Jayson's expression relaxed and he smiled for the first time. "For paying attention to it, I am grateful. In fact, while in the ward just now, you were ready to wait patiently and spoke in a gentle manner. With

that, I knew that you weren't like Jasper, therefore I felt okay with selling the script."

He then took a moment to collect his thoughts before saying, "But two hundred thousand dollars is the least I can do and it must get to my account upfront!"

A hint of anxiety could be heard in his voice as he said, "You've seen how sick my wife is. We need treatment money immediately, but we don't know where to get it!"

Ariana was confused. "Given that you want to sell the script, two hundred thousand dollars is a reasonable amount to spend on a quality script. I bet that Jasper would make a generous offer. I don't get it, sir. For what reason did you first decline Jasper and are willing to sell itto me now?"

Jayson was quiet for a while before explaining, "Because it was my wife who wrote this script based on her father's life, 1 had no intention of selling it. We both can't wait to see that script turned into a movie."

Ariana remained silently attentive to what he was saying.

"I'm assuming you looked into my information before making the trip here. I am only an unremarkable graduate of a minor institution. My unconventional approach to shooting is seldom acknowledged in comparison to that of students from prestigious colleges. The entertainment business hasn't made me

a household name. Julissa, my wife, is the one who has always kept me company."

"But I don't think your camerawork is any worse than that of the mainstream directors." Ariana tried to reassure him, but all Jayson could do was grin helplessly.

"No need to reassure me. I am well aware of the subpar quality of the films and dramas I have produced in recent years."