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Aiden nodded, glancing at her. "Everything is okay." He then set his phone aside, fixing his gaze back on Arwen. "How are you feeling now?" he asked, his voice returning to be as gentle as before. 1

Arwen smiled, "I am better." Her eyes darted to the phone that he had put away, and she added, "If you have some work to attend to, you can go. I will be fine here."

Aiden's brows furrowed slightly as he replied, "Work can wait. I am your husband, and my wife is my priority." 1

Although Arwen wouldn't have minded if Aiden had left to handle work matters, she couldn't deny that she liked his choice to stay. Her mother's teaching tugged at her conscience, reminding her not to be selfish and to let him go to attend his work. Yet, a deeper, more vulnerable part of her craved his attention. Growing up, she had been kept so deprived of such care and attention that now even a small freckle of it meant a lot.

"It's nice," she muttered suddenly, almost to herself.

Aiden, who had just turned to look away,

immediately looked back at her. "What?" he asked.

Arwen would have shaken her head and said it was nothing. But realizing his gestures deserved appreciation, she instead replied, "To be someone's priority at times."

"You are and will always be my priority, Moon," Aiden said, his tone filled with conviction.

Arwen felt her eyes sting with unshed tears. "That's why I said it's nice," she whispered, her voice soft but heartfelt.

Aiden shook his head at her understated response before leaning in to reach for an apple beside her. "Do you want some apples?" he asked.

Arwen hadn't expected him to move so close, all of a sudden. So when it happened, her breath cough. She instinctively tried to lean back, but the inclined pillow behind left her no room to scoot away. With no other option, she sat frozen, holding her breath.

"What happened?" he asked, noticing the blush rising on her cheeks. "Are you not feeling well?" His voice was laced with concern, which only made Arwen feel guilty. Here, he was worried about her, and she was caught up in unnecessary thoughts.

Arwen, can you think normally for once? Every time he gets close, you don't need to drag those silly novel-inspired imaginations here. She chided herself before clearing her throat to respond, "I am fine. I was just saying that it's okay —I can have the apples later. You don't have to trouble yourself with cutting them now."

Ignoring her protest, Aiden began peeling the apple with practiced ease, slicing it into perfect shapes. When Arwen noticed what he was doing, she was taken aback. "Wait ... are you cutting them in rabbit shapes?"

Aiden's movements paused as if frozen.

"My Granna used to cut them like this for me and since then I have always preferred it this way. I am just surprised that you know to cut them like this." Arwen said with a smile. But then, finding something amiss, she paused and asked, "Wait a second, I never told you about my childish preference. How did you know?"

Aiden didn't respond immediately. Instead, he resumed slicing the rest of the apple. "I learned it," he said casually, and Arwen raised her brows at that.

"You learned it, specifically?" she asked, her tone tinged with a hint of jealousy.

Aiden hummed in acknowledgement before



nodding. "I once met a stubborn young girl, who refused to eat apples unless they were cut like this," he explained, handing her a slice before adding, "So, I had to learn how to cut them her way so she would eat."

Arwen stared at the slice of the apple in her hand. A twinge of jealousy twisted in her chest, though she refused to acknowledge it. *'A young girl ... That must have been a kid,'* she told herself. *'After all, what grown woman would be so childish as to throw a tantrum over apples?'*

Taking a bite of the slice, she chewed slowly, letting the sweetness of the apple melt on her tongue. Despite her attempt to brush off the pang of jealousy, it lingered like a shadow in the corner of her mind. She stole a glance at Aiden, who was not focused on slicing another apple with the same practiced precision.

"Well, I never knew you could be this patient to someone else apart from me. Was that little girl special?" She could hold herself back from asking.

Aiden smiled at something that Arwen could understand. She would have asked him what was it, but before she could, she heard him say.

"My patience is only reserved for you, Moon. You have got it right," he said with a small smile. "But I suppose stubborn, adorable kids —much like



you —would also make the list."

The tightness in Arwen's chest eased when she heard his answer. So it was truly some child and not a young woman. Holding back her satisfied smile, she said, "Adorable kids are generally not stubborn, and stubborn kids are not usually adorable. Why do I feel like you are making up your own category here? Do you think you will find kids like that anywhere?"

"Maybe not now, but certainly in future," he replied, nearly smirking.

It took a moment for her to understand what he meant. When realization dawned upon her, her face turned crimson. She glanced at Aiden, trying to confirm if he meant what she thought.

Aiden, noticing her reaction, leaned closer, his smirk deepening. "What's wrong, Moon? Thinking too far ahead?"

Flustered, Arwen quickly looked away, trying to hide her embarrassment. *How did she not realize when he started flirting?* "It's not me, rather it's you who is thinking far too ahead here."

"Am I?" Aiden asked teasing her. "Tell me, what did I think far too ahead?"

"You —" Arwen turned to look at him, ready to scold him. But before she could, Aiden fed her

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another bite of the apple, making her mouth go full.

"You are adorable when you are like this," he said, his tone warm and teasing, making Arwen pout.

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