

Extraordinary 311

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I knew it! Ashlyn was the top scorer of the national exams who wasn't on the list!

Lucas had been making a wild guess all along. Finally, he got to verify the truth with someone aware of the incident.

His mind was blown away the moment Susan unveiled the truth in front of him.

He cast a penetrating gaze at Ashlyn, sizing her up repetitively in disbelief because he couldn't believe Ashlyn had grown up by her grandmother's side in the village.

Nevertheless, everything made sense when he thought about it, especially regarding Ashlyn's relationship with her grandmother. All of a sudden, Lucas felt a great sense of respect towards Susan the moment he figured out she was the one who had brought Ashlyn up since she was young.

"Grandma, thank you so much for everything you have done over the years." Lucas leaned over and told her softly, "Ashlyn is an exceptional girl."

Lucas was overjoyed because Ashlyn was the fifteen-year-old prodigy, the top scorer of the national exams he had been searching for all along.

Although Ashlyn was the center of their conversation, she remained silent throughout the session because they didn't give her the chance to express her point of view.

Lucas did a great job peeling the skin off the apple without peeling off the flesh. He managed to peel it off in a flash as though it was a piece of cake for him.

He got up from his seat and diced the apple into bite-size chunks for Susan. In the end, he placed the diced apples on the plate and served it along with a tiny fork.

"Grandma, give it a try! These are McIntosh Red." Lucas placed the plate of apples in front of Susan, urging her to try them.

"Thank you." Judging by Lucas' appearance and the way he presented himself in front of her, Susan was certain he was from a wealthy family.

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She was afraid Lucas would turn his back against Ashlyn someday in the future.

The minute she thought about it, she asked, helping herself with a piece of apple, "Do you have any siblings?"

Susan's query took Lucas by surprise, but he replied with a smile, "I have an older sister, a younger brother, and a younger sister. My parents live abroad because they are involved in the field of research."

Lucas wasn't aware of the slight change in Ashlyn's expression the moment she heard that his parents

were involved in the field of research.

Ashlyn was surprised because she wasn't aware that Lucas had an older sister.

Although she was aware of his younger siblings' existence, she had never once seen her older sister in person.

She turned around and looked at Lucas in doubt because she realized there were a lot of things about him which she wasn't aware of.

It seemed like Lucas had detected the skeptical gaze from Ashlyn. Hence, he shared, "My sister has been staying abroad with my parents all this while because she's also in the field of research."

However, Ashlyn remained silent upon hearing his reply. She noticed it was getting late, and Susan was getting tired as well. Hence, she broke the silence and told him, "I think it's time for you to leave now. It's getting late."

But he refused to get up from his seat as his huge body leaned against the couch in the ward, suggesting, "I don't want to leave Grandma alone. You should get some rest in the lounge next door. I'll stay back to keep an eye on her."

Truth be told, it sounded like an instruction rather than a suggestion.

Lucas sounded as though he was carrying out his duty as Susan's grandson-in-law.

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Before Ashlyn could rebuke the man's suggestion, Susan urged, "No, Lucas! You're not allowed to stay back. Hurry up and return home to get some rest. I don't need anyone to look after me because there are nurses on duty in the hospital, right? I want both of you to get out of my sight as soon as possible."

Susan thought about it and instructed with a serious expression in the end, "Lucas, I have a mission for you. I want you to send Ashlyn home on my behalf and ensure got home safely."

Ashlyn was about to refute her grandmother's instructions, but Susan insisted, assuring determinedly, "I'm fine! It's but a trivial cough! Hurry up and get going! Otherwise, I'll get angry for real!"

Since Ashlyn knew her grandmother better than anyone else, she had to leave with Lucas because she didn't want to irritate her any further.

It was very late when they made their way out of Susan's ward.

The initially bustling hospital fell into silence, concealing the sign of the scenes the trios from the Berry family had caused a few hours ago.

Ashlyn felt lost because she didn't expect Lucas would engage in such a heartwarming conversation with her grandmother.

She was at a loss for words because Lucas had always been a man superior to others. Thus, she didn't expect he would go to great lengths to take care of her grandmother.

As Ashlyn turned the ideas in her mind, she reflected on her actions, thinking she was the one at fault.

I must have accidentally neglected Grandma's wellbeing... I should have spent more time with her, taking care of her needs.

Apart from feeling guilty, she blamed herself for the mistakes she had made.

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When she ran into her grandmother curling up on the bed in the attic of the Berry Residence, she almost broke down into tears. In fact, she could barely resist the strong urge she felt to teach the trios from the Berry family a lesson.

Nonetheless, the rational part of her reminded her of the fact that Horace was her biological father. No matter what sort of sins her father had committed against her grandmother, she couldn't deny the fact they were biologically related.

If it were a stranger who had bullied her grandmother, she could easily teach them a lesson, beating them to a pulp.

However, the person involved was her father. Even though she couldn't beat him to a pulp, she could easily ruin his life.

Ashlyn had made up her mind to teach her father a lesson despite their relationship.

A black Bentley whizzed through the isolated highway in the middle of the night.

Lucas turned around to stare at the woman by his side, trying to figure out the things the woman had in her mind.

"Let's return to Whitland Villa because I'm pretty sure your friends in Bayview Villa are sleeping soundly now. For their sake, we shouldn't get in their way and interrupt their sleep."

"Since when has the wellbeing of Jared and his subordinates become your concern? Don't you find yourself hilarious for making such a remark?" Ashlyn frowned.

She couldn't believe her ears because the man had gone to great lengths, including telling a blunt lie, just because he wanted to bring her back to his place.

Did he seriously tell me that was for the sake of others? To begin with, he has never been such a caring man!

Lucas wasn't angry even though Ashlyn had exposed his lie. Instead, he beamed his reply, "You can always turn me down if that's what you want."

Suddenly, Ashlyn turned around and looked at the man because it felt as though the man, whom she loved wholeheartedly when they got married, had returned.

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On the other hand, Spencer, who had always been the most observant one, noticed the change in Lucas' mood.

It was evident that Lucas was in a great mood. Actually, throughout the four years of their marriage, Lucas was in a great mood most of the time.

Therefore, Lucas' subordinates, including Spencer, thought Lucas was a very nice person.

However, things had taken a drastic turn of events ever since they filed for divorce. Lucas was often in a foul mood, depending on Ashlyn's behavior.

Since Lucas had spent half of his time throughout the night by Ashlyn's side, and another half of it chit-chatting with Susan, he was in a great mood.

Therefore, the wrathful and fearsome Lucas was nowhere to be found. Instead, the gentle and caring Lucas had taken over.

I'm pretty sure it won't last forever because he'll return to the wrathful and fearsome self soon once Ms. Berry cast him aside.

Spencer had concluded that Ashlyn was Lucas' mainstay. However, Lucas wasn't aware of the fact, or rather he refused to acknowledge the fact.

Although it seems like Mr. Nolan is a tough nut to crack, it's quite easy to read his mood because it is always written on his face. In short, Ms. Berry is the only one he cares about.

In two shakes of a lamb's tail, they had arrived at Whitland Villa.

Ashlyn alighted from the car with a poker face, but she couldn't move on from the things Lucas had done over the past few hours.

To her surprise, Lucas was unexpectedly patient with her grandmother, while he didn't hesitate to teach the unfilial trios from the Berry family a lesson.

Lucas had done certain things which she couldn't do as part of the Berry family.

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Once they entered the villa, Ashlyn heard a growling sound coming from Lucas' stomach when she was about to tell him she would spend the night in the guest room.

Grunt!

Ashlyn raised her brows and teased him, "Oh? It seems like the almighty president is starving, huh? That's quite a surprise!"

"I'm not a freak, okay?" Lucas replied helplessly.

In return, he had his gaze fixated on Ashlyn, asking her in a husky voice, "Shall we eat or have some fun?"

"Let's just eat!" Ashlyn flushed embarrassedly as she replied.

The man in front of her chuckled, stating, "I have such a lovely and caring wife. It seems like she can't wait to fill my tummy because she's afraid I'm going to starve. I'll take great care of you in the future as well, Honey!"

Ashlyn was at a loss for words because the man had utterly misunderstood her words.

Is he trying to mess with my words again? That's definitely not what I have in mind. This man is sick!

...

Ashlyn headed over to the kitchen and checked on the available ingredients in the refrigerator.

The refrigerator was packed with all sorts of fresh ingredients, as though Lucas had been anticipating Ashlyn's arrival all along.

She reached for a few simple ingredients and started preparing them accordingly.

In the end, she prepared spaghetti carbonara and tomato soup from scratch.

Although the two dishes were relatively simple, they seemed appetizing, easily tempting the taste buds of an adult.

She stood in the dining hall, staring at the man in the living room, who was on the couch with a laptop on his lap.

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He was sitting around casually, going through the content on his laptop. Once he detected the woman's gaze, he raised his head and looked in the direction of Ashlyn.

Ashlyn, who was about to get him to join her for a late supper, exchanged glances with him.

The handsome man's glistening pair of eyes flickered. He was enshrouded by the gentle shimmer as he sat in the well-illuminated space.

Consequently, the outstanding features on Lucas' face were highlighted, distinguishing the man's stunning visual.

Ashlyn's heart skipped a beat upon detecting the man's gentle gaze because she was on the verge of falling for him all over again.

Lucas stared at the woman in the eyes for a few seconds before turning around, putting the laptop he had with him aside, asking, "Honey, is it time to eat?"

"Mm..."

Ashlyn took a deep breath and calmed herself down with all her might. She placed her hands on her burning cheeks before returning to the kitchen to get the cutlery.

Finally, they took their seats in the dining hall.

All of a sudden, Ashlyn's heart pounded furiously because things had gotten odd between them.

Obviously, Ashlyn felt uncomfortable due to the man's behavior.

The scent of the delicacies prepared permeated throughout the dining hall, inducing the lovely pairs to dig in.

Ever since Lucas took his seat, he had his eyes glued to Ashlyn. He went all out and showed her the

affection he had for her through physical manifestation.

“Honey, thank you for preparing such a scrumptious meal.” Once again, the man broke the silence, asking with a husky voice before Ashlyn could express her feeling.

She took a peek, whining, “Let’s cut the crap and dig in, shall we?”

Lucas smirked, digging in as instructed, occasionally glancing at Ashlyn who was opposite him in an intimate manner.

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Although they were divorced a long time ago, Ashlyn had gotten used to him addressing her in such an intimate manner.

Previously, she would correct him and instruct him to address her in a different manner, but she couldn't be bothered by it anymore as she had gotten used to it.

"Not really, but I don't mind involving myself in one either," Ashlyn replied nonchalantly.

Lucas lowered his gaze, thinking about the time Ashlyn donated the fortune he had bestowed upon to build a school in his name.

He was shocked and surprised because never would he have thought Ashlyn would forsake such a huge fortune.

After all, there weren't many people in the world who would be able to remain sane, especially when a fortune worthy of a few hundred million showed up from nowhere.

Lucas was impressed by the woman's willpower. because Ashlyn was one of the rare few who wouldn't be blinded by greed. In fact, she didn't hesitate to donate it all for a greater cause.

Once they finished their meal, Lucas felt great since he had his tummy filled.

On the other hand, Ashlyn insisted on spending the night in the guest room.

Lucas was reluctant but gave in to Ashlyn's request because he was aware that she had a long day.

He stopped insisting and returned to his room, but he couldn't bring himself to fall asleep the moment he recalled the existence of the woman next door.

On the next day morning, Ashlyn saw him reading the newspaper in the living room once she walked down the stairs.

He raised his head and looked in her direction the moment he heard footsteps from the stairs.

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He had a set of casual lounge wear on, sitting idly on the couch, exuding a noble presence early in the morning.

No matter how attractive Lucas was, Ashlyn paid no heed to him and made her way into the kitchen right away.

She started cooking in the kitchen because she had to prepare breakfast for her grandmother who had been hospitalized.

Ashlyn didn't want her grandmother to eat the meals prepared by the hospital because they won't be as nutritious and delicious as the ones she cooked for her.

The golden rays of the sun illuminated the confined space, whereas the greasy sense of smoke could be detected coming from the kitchen.

Lucas heard the sound of the kitchen chimney being put into work early in the morning. Apart from that, the crackling sound of the spatula crashing against the saucepan could be heard.

Eventually, he strode over to the kitchen, leaning against the wall, staring at Ashlyn's busy figure.

She turned around, instructing because she detected the man staring at her, “Come help me do the dishes.”

Since the man decided to poke his nose into her business, she decided to put him to work and asked him to wash the dishes.

Without further ado, Lucas rolled up his sleeves and joined her in the kitchen, washing the used plates and utensils.

He was in close proximity to the woman. Hence, she could detect the arousing scent coming from the man.

In the end, her heart skipped a beat because she was afraid she would lose control of herself once more.

Due to the man's overwhelming presence, she scrunched her nose up in irritation because she couldn't

ignore his presence.

Before long, Lucas passed the ingredients he had prepared over to Ashlyn.

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Ashlyn's heart skipped another beat because the man accidentally ran his slender fingers across her back.

Consequently, her body temperature increased drastically as though she had been scalded by boiling water.

Unintentional provocation would be the deadliest. Perhaps it could be a decisive blow on Ashlyn.

"Do you need anything else?" The man asked nonchalantly, and yet it sounded different for Ashlyn because she heard the man dragging his sentence as though he was trying to seduce her.

What the hell is wrong with this man's raging hormone? It has been provoking me since the day starts. That's it! I'm out of here!

The moment she raised her head, her heart started pounding furiously once again because she accidentally exchanged glances with the man.

Undeniably, Lucas had been blessed with great features that would put all the other men in the world to shame.

Ashlyn couldn't resist the man's seductive gaze because he looked at her in an intimate manner, expressing the affection he had for her through his glistening pair of eyes.

It felt as though she would fall head over heels in love with him once more if she continued staring at him in the eyes.

Once breakfast was ready, she served the man his meal.

She could barely resist the urge to stare at the man's attractive face as she sat opposite Lucas.

Even though she had been staring at the same face for four years, she had a hard time catching her breath because her heart would race the moment she saw his face.

She was certain it was the Spirogyra in action once again because her heart pounded furiously.

In the end, Ashlyn took a deep breath, suggesting, "Lucas, shall we talk about it?"

"Talk about what?" Lucas asked, raising his eyebrows in confusion.

"Do you remember the topic that we were talking about back in the café some time ago? We are divorced. What exactly do you want from me? You have plenty of options out there and there are a lot of women who wish to be Mrs. Nolan as well," Ashlyn replied, nodding.

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I have never once shown any sign of interest in him, but the heiresses of the wealthy families are literally dying to get into a relationship with him. After all, he's such a handsome and exceptional young man!

I'm sure there are plenty of equally exceptional young women who are trying to court him!

If that's the case, why won't he forget about me and move on?

Ashlyn couldn't figure out the rationale behind the man's action. Therefore, she wanted to sort things out once and for all.

"Honey, does that mean you want to know the truth?" Actually, Lucas wasn't aware of the rationale behind his absurd actions either. "Ever since we got divorced, I couldn't get used to living alone without you by my side. In fact, I would get extremely irritated whenever a woman tried to approach me. I'm trying to figure out what's wrong with me as well. I want to be sure of the type of affection I have for you. That's the reason why I have been approaching you non-stop."

Ashlyn fell silent for a few seconds before replying, "Perhaps you haven't gotten used to living alone without me, but that's perfectly fine because it's going to take twenty-one days for a person to cultivate a new habit. After twenty-one days, I'm sure you'll live a fantastic life without me."

She gave it a thought for some time. In the end, she urged Lucas in a serious tone, "You need to get into a relationship with someone whom you have a thing for. Spend some quality time with her instead of wasting your time on your ex-wife. I no longer feel anything for you. I'm pretty sure it's the same for you, right? If things could work out between us, it would have long worked out four years ago. If that were the case, we wouldn't have filed for divorce then."

Speaking of which, isn't it impossible for this man to get in love with someone else? I mean, he's a merciless man who wouldn't hesitate to conceal his emotions. I can't imagine what's in store for the woman who's gonna get into a relationship with him. Perhaps she will be tortured by him day and night.

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Meanwhile, Lucas narrowed his eyes, asking, "Why don't you tell me how does it feel to get in love with someone?"

Since Ashlyn had never fallen in love with anyone else, she couldn't be sure about it either.

Nonetheless, she imagined how it would feel like to be in love with someone and decided to share it with Lucas, "Perhaps you will want to spend most of your time by her side, carrying out all sorts of intimate activities. She's the only one you care about and the only one that matters when you plan for your future."

Actually, Ashlyn was merely quoting the dialogues of the protagonists of a random soap opera she came across on television.

She had a hard time repeating the dialogues of the protagonists due to her personality.

In the end, she blushed embarrassedly once she finished her sentence.

Oh, God! I'm trying to get Lucas to stay away from me, right? Why are we discussing what it feels like to be in love with someone else?

Ashlyn was disgusted by her own words as well.

In actual fact, this was the first time they had a casual conversation in such a heartwarming setting.

Usually, they would engage themselves in rounds and rounds of intense fights whenever they had conflicting points of view.

In the end, Ashlyn blamed the weather for her odd behavior. She deemed the overly bright sunlight in the morning to be the reason behind their abnormal conduct.

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That was the reason she had said so many useless and unnecessary things.

She raised her eyes to stare at the man before her who was so handsome it almost hurt to look at him. She couldn't help but curse bitterly in her heart. This rascal!

She tried to keep her dignity intact. "Don't mind me. I was only quoting what I heard from a soap opera on TV."

She feigned calmness.

However, Lucas' had a pensive look on his face after hearing what she had said.

Want to spend most of your time by her side?

Carrying out all sorts of intimate activities? She's the only one you care about? And the only one that matters when you're planning about the future...

Lucas flicked his eyes to Ashlyn, his gaze gradually becoming unreadable, with only a trace of perplexity apparent in it.

He had never thought of digging deeper into the reason why he always went crazy with wanting to see Ashlyn whenever she was out of his sight.

He never thought that he would fall in love with someone in this lifetime.

However, this revelation wasn't that hard for him to accept since the person he fell for was Ashlyn.

This lady is so beautiful I can't take my eyes off her.

She's also very capable. Not only is she a distinguished doctor in the medical field, but she's also a gangster boss.

She has a good figure too and has fair legs which are long and straight.

She has a kind heart and loves to help people in any way she can.

She...

As Lucas studied her, more and more admirable qualities in her popped into his mind; it was a never-ending list.

The only thing that he didn't like about her was that she attracted too many admirers. That was the reason she had said so many useless and unnecessary things.

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Ashlyn lowered her head to eat when Lucas' solemn voice sounded, "Honey, I'm going crazy with wanting to be close to you. I don't want you to leave my sight, and I want to make love to you every day. If you want, I can even give you my life. Honey, I think I've fallen for you."

Cough, cough, cough—

Ashlyn had just taken a sip of her soup and almost choked on it after hearing what he said.

Violent coughs racked through her chest for quite some time before dying down.

The man patted her back, then took a piece of tissue and handed it to her.

Ashlyn wiped the edges of her mouth with it. She couldn't tell if her face was red from embarrassment or due to her coughing episode.

She stared at Lucas with shock sprawled across her face. "Don't you go crazy on me. This isn't funny. Not even a little bit."

She had only just thought about how miserable the woman who caught Lucas' fancy would be. It was because Lucas was an absolute lunatic!

Never in a million years did she expect that she would become that miserable woman.

There seemed to be a fire raging in her heart, its flames licking her insides and making her feel uncomfortable.

"Did I scare you?" Lucas leveled his gaze with Ashlyn's. His eyes shone with unconcealed desire for her, and his entire demeanor resembled a predator stalking its prey. "Honey, just say the word, and I'll give you my life. I really want to make love to you every day."

Ashlyn met those eyes of his which were burning with lust. She instantly became flustered and felt like making a run for it.

However, she resisted the urge to do so.

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She didn't know how to face this situation, nor how to conceal the strange emotions she was feeling or the sound of her heart hammering vigorously against her ribcage.

"You just f***ing wanna sleep with me! You're a scumbag with raging hormones of a teenage boy who only uses your d*** to think!" She blurted out.

Lucas was rendered speechless.

This was the first time in his life he had confessed to a woman, but it ended in failure.

To make matters worse, he was even called a scumbag.

He was only speaking the truth!

A real scum was a man who liked a woman but didn't have any desire to sleep with her. It just meant that there was something wrong with that man!

"I have to deliver food to my grandma!" With that, Ashlyn scurried into the kitchen.

She began to pack a lunchbox.

A few minutes later, she walked out of the villa.

Lucas immediately caught up to her. "I'll drive you, honey."

"It's fine!" Ashlyn wore a cold look on her face. I'm considered being polite by not kneeing him in the balls for being a scumbag that thinks with his d***.

Once she was out of the villa, she quickly hailed a cab. Meanwhile, a Bentley's engine roared to life and began tailing the cab she was in.

She looked out the windows and stared at the scenery whizzing by. After quite some time, she finally felt that her cheeks weren't feeling as hot as before.

Her racing heart gradually slowed down to a normal pace.

However, the moment she recalled what Lucas had said about giving her his life...

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Her heart started beating wildly again.

The man's low and sultry voice was rather appealing.

And it rang in her ears once again.

She reached up with both hands to cover her ears.

When she got out of the cab, a familiar voice sounded from behind.

"Stop right there, Ashlyn."

Ashlyn froze.

What the heck?

Do I seriously have to deal with Penelope this early in the morning?

Before she could say anything, Penelope spoke again, "So it really is you. Don't think that I'm not allowed to come here today just because you chased me out last night. You do know that I'm an official employee at the hospital, don't you?"

When Ashlyn turned around and saw Penelope's repulsive face, she felt incredibly irked. "You can come whenever you please. What does it have to do with me?"

Penelope's cheek was red and swollen. Even now, it was still throbbing painfully.

Spencer had indeed slapped her good last night.

Penelope couldn't suppress the anger boiling in her when she thought about this.

Her eyes burned with hatred. "I know exactly what you're thinking. You just want to inherit Berry Furnishings, don't you?"

Ashlyn gave her a cold stare. "So?"

"Dad already promised my mom that Berry Furnishings will be mine. Don't even dream about getting a single dime!" Penelope smugly said. "Hehe! I bet you're upset. After all, you're the second daughter of the Berry family, but your mom's gone, and Dad doesn't love you. You're probably hurting a lot now, aren't you?"

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"You just won't get the right of inheritance, that's all. You don't have to be so upset about it. After all, you have a pretty face, right? You can get yourself a sugar daddy or something! Wait, that security captain is your lover, isn't he?"

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"But...To be honest, with the qualities you possess, I'm sure you can find yourself a decent boyfriend. Why did you have to pick a security captain?"

"Is there something wrong with your brain, Penelope?" Ashlyn was disgusted by Penelope's stupidity.

She was so disgusted she could throw up.

She looked at Penelope's swollen face, feeling slightly fed up. Seeing as she came here to provoke her, it seemed like she still hadn't learned her lesson even after receiving so many slaps as per Lucas' orders.

"Ashlyn, our family is quite reputable, but here you are getting involved with a measly security captain. No wonder Dad doesn't like you." After discovering that Ashlyn was a doctor, not to mention the best surgeon around, Penelope could not think of another way to incite Ashlyn's anger besides using their father.

She wanted to display the sense of superiority before Ashlyn. However, it was a shame that Ashlyn was better than her at everything. Except for Horace, nothing and no one else came to Penelope's mind.

Wait. There's something else! When Penelope thought of something, her eyes glinted evilly.

"Hehe! He doesn't like me? Do you think I care about whether or not he likes me?"

Ashlyn scoffed mockingly.

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To put it simply, she had long given up on Horace.

She narrowed her eyes into slits.

Her eyes gleamed with ridicule and she looked at Penelope's swollen face without a hint of warmth in her gaze.

Then, she abruptly took a step forward.

Penelope jolted and quickly moved a step backward. Ashlyn was skilled in combat and she knew this very well.

"Wh-What are you doing?"

Penelope was only 1.6 m in height.

Ashlyn was close to 1.7 m in height, which meant that she was almost a head taller than Penelope. She looked down her nose at Penelope.

Penelope took two more steps backward involuntarily under her chilly gaze.

Suddenly, she realized that Ashlyn wasn't the same little girl she had always picked on when they were young.

Seeing Penelope's frightened expression, Ashlyn's face remained impassive. Penelope felt as if all the air was sucked out of her lungs by the intimidating aura Ashlyn was emanating. "Penelope, aren't you bored? Is that why you're here trying to get a rise out of me? I honestly couldn't care less about Horace's shabby company. If you want it, you can have it. It's only an empty shell which isn't worth my time or effort."

"An empty shell? Ashlyn, you're brushing it off as sour grapes just because you can't get it!" Although

Penelope was afraid, she remained as stubborn as a mule.

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Ashlyn's eyes were brimming with self-confidence as well as disdain for Penelope. "You'll know soon enough."

"How dare you curse Dad's company, Ashlyn!" Penelope's features contorted with anger as she glared at Ashlyn.

She loved to flaunt her branded bags and clothes in their department. But of course, she couldn't afford all of those with only her measly salary. It was with the pocket money Horace gave her that she got to enjoy this kind of privilege.

What was she going to do if Horace fell from grace?

How much money could she make as a nurse?

She gritted her teeth and threatened, "Just you wait, Ashlyn. I'll go home and tell Dad what you said. Let's see how he'll punish you!"

She really despised Ashlyn.

Since they were young, she would fade into the background every time Ashlyn was in the same room, serving as her backdrop.

All the boys she fancied would fall head over heels for Ashlyn. She wanted so badly to tear up Ashlyn's pretty face!

"You can go ahead and whine to him all you like, but you saw what happened last night, right? He was powerless against me. Do you really think that things are still the same as last time, where he'd beat me up whenever you complained about me? Penelope Berry, he can't lay a finger on me anymore! Not now, and not ever."

Penelope's eyes flashed with jealousy. "Let me tell you, Ashlyn. I'm gonna take away Berry Furnishings and all of Dad's love and attention from you. In fact, I'll take away everything from you!"

Ashlyn arched a brow and looked at Penelope as if she had grown two heads. A hint of mockery streaked across her indifferent eyes as she said, "What a crazy b****."

She was not the little girl who longed for her father's love anymore, nor was she the weak and timid little girl who was always framed by her stepmother and stepsister.

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A father who did not love her was just perfect, since he was already dead to her!

She thought Penelope would at least come up with something more entertaining.

However, it turned out that all she had to say was just a bunch of nonsense which wasted so much of her time.

She swiveled around and was about to leave when she suddenly heard a frigid yet magnetic voice.

“Spencer, how many more slaps do you think we should give her?”

“Five, Mr. Nolan.” Spencer answered respectfully.

The morning sun bathed the man’s tall figure in its glory as he approached Ashlyn in long strides.

His handsome face which looked like it was sculpted by God himself made him seem untouchable to many. Currently, his features were taut and he appeared peeved.

When he was in front of her, he held her hand and said, “If you see rubbish, just tell me and I’ll get rid of it for you.”

Before Ashlyn could react, slapping sounds assaulted her ears.

Each slap was louder than the next.

And following those slaps was Penelope’s wails of pain.

“Ah! It hurts— —”

She wanted to run.

Unfortunately, two burly men in black came out of nowhere and immediately held her firmly in place, and put her directly in front of Spencer.

She could only clench her jaw and endure those five slaps.

Fresh blood slid down the corner of her mouth.

The swelling on her face since yesterday had yet to reduce, and now she was slapped so harshly again. The swelling on her face since yesterday had yet to reduce, and now she was slapped so harshly again.

She looked absolutely miserable.

Even so, she did not garner anyone’s sympathy.

Tears escaped Penelope's eyes and streamed down her face uncontrollably.

She was in so much pain that she felt like collapsing onto the ground.

There were people going in and out of the hospital and many of them glanced in her direction.

She sent pleading gazes towards these people, but none of them dared to step forward.

She felt miserable and helpless, but more humiliated.

Her eyes were gleaming viciously as she glared at Ashlyn.

Ashlyn looked noble and elegant standing next to an unbelievably good-looking man such as Lucas. The beauty she had made women envious of her, but it only served to trigger the deep-seated hatred Penelope had for her.

She loathed her!

She was so tempted to maul her pretty face.

If it weren't for her, I wouldn't be treated like that by this man!

If it weren't for her, I wouldn't have been reduced to a state where I have to be a wallflower forever!

Ashlyn couldn't be bothered with Penelope anymore, so she turned around and left.

The handsome man trailed after her closely.

In the hospital ward, Susan had just finished washing up and came out of the bathroom.

When she saw Ashlyn, her face brightened and a smile stretched across her lips. "Ashlyn."

Upon seeing that her grandmother's mood had largely improved compared to last night, Ashlyn felt much more relieved. "Grandma, I made you some breakfast. Please eat some, okay?"

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"How are you, Grandma? Are you feeling better?" Lucas followed Ashlyn into the room as well.

Susan was surprised to see this tall and handsome man. Gazing at Lucas, her eyes glimmered with emotion as she courteously said, "Lucas, what are you doing here so early in the morning? Don't you need to go to work? You really don't need to worry too much over an old lady like me."

Lucas nodded lightly. "Grandma, you don't need to be so polite with me."

Ashlyn took out the lunchbox she had prepared and turned around, only to see that there were expensive gift boxes strewn all over the couch on the far end of the room as well as the coffee table in the center.

The gifts included supplements and some lavish daily necessities.

She could also tell that the flowers in the room had just been changed by the dewdrops on the sunflower petals.

One glance was enough for her to conclude that Lucas was the one who prepared everything.

Horace would never be this kind.

Ashlyn stared at Lucas with a complicated gaze as her heart fluttered in her chest. "You're more thoughtful than I am. Thank you."

This man is so attentive.

Even more so than me as a granddaughter.

"Your Grandma is my Grandma too." Lucas' dark eyes narrowed slightly as he peered down at her, saying in a baritone voice, "You treated my grandfather better than I ever did last time, so... it's my turn now."

Ashlyn was taken aback. Her long lashes fluttered slightly as she thought about the time Charles was still alive.

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She used to be in a hidden marriage last time, so she couldn't take her grandmother in.

Now that she was divorced, she was going to stay with her grandmother no matter what.

Susan studied the two of them with her wise eyes. The more she did, the more she was certain that they were a match made in heaven.

"I have told Lucas not to do anything excessive, but that assistant of his, Spencer, kept sending in gifts of every size."

Even as she said that, she was smiling from ear to ear. "My dear boy Lucas, I don't really need anything. Ashlyn is a doctor here. All of the hospital staff treat me like a family, making me feel at home. This clearly isn't a hospital because of the way I'm being pampered here."

Lucas chuckled, a trace of warmth peeking out from his usually cold eyes. "You are a very optimistic and happy person and I'm sure you'll get better in no time, Grandma."

Ashlyn kept silent as she brought over the breakfast for Susan. Lucas quickly opened the foldable mini table and placed it on the bed.

Ashlyn's phone abruptly rang right at that moment.

She answered the call and heard a fearful voice, "Ms. B-Berry, this... this is Charlotte Lynch."

On the other end of the line, Charlotte's face was blushed and her palms were clammy with sweat from nervousness.

Her eyes darted towards Lochlan with a tinge of uncertainty flashing in them and he gave her an encouraging look.

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His large palm enveloped her tiny one as he murmured, "You can do it."

Charlotte bit her lower lip as Ashlyn's soothing voice sounded from the other end, "What's the matter? Is something wrong?"

"Well..." Charlotte's heart galloped in her chest and every word she had planned to say flew out the window. "I-I-I..."

She just couldn't formulate a proper string of words.

And her face flushed a deep scarlet red the more she hyperventilated.

Lochlan felt his heart ache at the sight of this. "Take a deep breath. You can do this, Lottie. Ms. Berry cares about you very much and I'm sure she'll be willing to hear you out."

Although Ashlyn didn't know what Charlotte was trying to say, she instinctively softened her voice as she coaxed Charlotte, "What is it, Charlotte? Hmm? Take your time to tell me. Don't worry, your Uncle Lochlan can afford the extra charges on the phone bill."

Ashlyn's attempt at joking worked and Charlotte's racing heartbeat gradually slowed to a regular pace.

When she was no longer so nervous, she was able to speak in coherent sentences, "I want to invite Ms. Berry to accompany me... to the suburbs for nature drawing. Is that okay?"

There, I've said it!

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She had finally spat the words out.

Charlotte felt as if she had gotten a heavy weight off her chest.

A thin layer of sweat had formed on her back.

She raised her head and beamed at Lochlan, as if she were waiting for him to commend her for a job well done.

Lochlan couldn't help lifting his hand to tousle the girl's hair. "You did great."

Ashlyn glanced at her grandmother, but couldn't bring herself to reject Charlotte.

It took the little girl a lot of courage to make this call. Hence, the little girl would be very disappointed if she rejected her.

"What's wrong?" Lucas raised his brows at her. He had vaguely heard their conversation.

This is another girl who just loves clinging onto her.

What's so nice about clinging onto her?

"Charlotte invites me to go nature drawing with her, but Grandma..." Ashlyn hesitated slightly.

Charlotte was not an unreasonable girl. When she heard what Ashlyn said, she shoved down the disappointment in her heart and quickly added, "If... If you're busy, we can do it some other time."

"Just go ahead, Ashlyn. I have nurses to take care of me here." Susan suggested with a smile, "Bring Lucas with you. I'll feel more relieved knowing that he's there to protect you girls."

Ashlyn was at a loss for words.

Lucas glanced at Susan with approval shining in his eyes. Not bad, Grandma. Not bad at all. I guess I'll have to treat Grandma even better from now on.

He had been racking his brains for a way to tag along with Ashlyn. After all, the youngest son of the Fraser family wasn't married yet. Thus, it was dangerous to leave her alone with a single man, very dangerous indeed.

Lochlan had no idea that he had been marked by Lucas.

Ashlyn couldn't very well bite Lucas' head off in front of her grandmother.

She could only swallow her retort and agree to it, informing the nurse to call her if something happened.

In the Fraser residence.

Charlotte's face lit up like a kid's on Christmas day as joy filled every inch of her.

“Uncle Lochlan, do I look pretty in this?”

She was wearing a white T-shirt with a pair of flowery capri pants that reached above her shins, exposing the fair skin of her legs.

The high-waist design of it accentuated her slim waist.

She gave off the aura of a sophisticated young lady.

Lochlan couldn't help but gulp when he saw how refreshingly attractive she looked.

“Yes. Very pretty.”

“Do you think Ms. Berry would approve of the way I'm dressed?” Charlotte blushed a little upon being praised by a man.

Amidst Lochlan's happiness was a trace of jealousy. He used to be the most important person to the girl.

But now, Ashlyn had taken over.

However, he felt relieved when he thought of how patient Ashlyn was with Charlotte.

Fortunately, she was a female.

If it were a male, he would probably puke blood.

The two of them came out of the walk-in closet and as usual, Lochlan held her hand as they made their way downstairs.

“Hey. Where are the two of you going?” A high-pitched voice called out.

Lochlan's expression instantly changed and he looked towards the sofa in the living room. A woman was lounging on the sofa with one leg crossed over the other and holding a cup of tea as she stared at them.

“Mom? What are you doing here?” Lochlan frowned.

“Do I need a reason to visit my son's house?” Mrs. Fraser glanced at Charlotte impatiently. She would always get upset whenever she saw this burden of a human being.

Charlotte squeaked out a polite greeting, “Good morning, Mrs. Fraser.”

She was terrified of Mrs. Fraser.

Since the day she was adopted by Lochlan, Mrs. Fraser had never once treated her with kindness.

Mrs. Fraser rolled her eyes and ignored her. She continued speaking to Lochlan, "Tomorrow's the weekend. The Warhol family's daughter has returned from abroad. I want you to take her around Lake City and make sure you entertain her properly."

"Mom, I haven't seen her in more than ten years. I don't want to entertain her." Lochlan felt slightly irritated.

"Do you even know how old you are this year? Twenty-eight! When your brother was your age, Nathan could already do small little house chores. Nathan is already twelve years old now, but you're still not married yet!" Mrs. Fraser was so angry that she shot up from the sofa. "So you're going tomorrow. End of discussion! I was the one who initiated this outing with the Warhol family. Their family has power and is very influential in Lake City, so you have nothing to lose by marrying their daughter!"

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Are you refusing to marry because of this little b****? The words were at the tip of her tongue, and she wanted so badly to point a finger at Lochlan and yell at him.

However, she resisted the urge to do so.

The sight of the girl had grated on her nerves since a long time ago, but she refrained from saying anything about it in front of her son.

This little b**** is a vixen who will only drag my son down.

She had blossomed into a graceful young lady in the past few years. Men would inevitably be attracted to her beauty like a moth to a flame.

The problem was that she was ill and did not even go to university. What good was a daughter-in-law like her? She would be an embarrassment to their family.

Only a socialite from a noble family was worthy of becoming the Fraser family's daughter-in-law.

A girl with unknown origins would never be worthy of her son.

But her son spoiled this girl to bits. It was fine if he took care of her for just a while when she was little, or perhaps treated her like a pet just for his amusement.

However, it looked like her son had completely rejected the idea of marriage.

The knot that had formed in Mrs. Fraser's chest due to all her pent-up frustrations was so tight she

found it hard to breathe at times.

Whenever she looked at Charlotte, she saw a pile of s***. She could not understand why her son treated her like some kind of precious jewel.

If the girl were healthy and well educated, she could probably accept her as her daughter-in-law.

Nevertheless, the girl was nothing to her dismay.

So no way!

Both of them must be separated at all costs.

As long as this little b**** stays, it'll be impossible for my son to marry a daughter from a socialite family.

She must be sent away.

"Mom, I'm attending Charlotte's rehearsal tomorrow. She's participating in the National Day Gala Night held by the government. Tomorrow is her first day of rehearsal and it's very important. I have to go with her." Lochlan immediately rejected his mother.

Mrs. Fraser was livid. "She's not a child anymore. Why don't you accompany Ms. Warhol tomorrow, and I'll accompany Lottie to the rehearsal."

Charlotte's chest constricted with panic and she subconsciously gripped the edge of Lochlan's shirt.

Mrs. Fraser became more infuriated when she noticed this minute detail. "I'm not a monster that's going to eat her up."

"Mom... Lottie trusts me more." Lochlan stated in a decisive tone, "You should get someone else to accompany Ms. Warhol."

When Charlotte saw that the mother and son were about to quarrel again, she bit down hard on her lower lip.

She did not want her uncle to quarrel with his mother because of her.

She was a little bit scared and looked at Lochlan with a hint of reluctance in her eyes as she whispered, "I... I can go alone. Ms. Berry will be there."

The way she stammered in a timid voice only sounded petty to Mrs. Fraser's eyes.

She could hardly pass off as a normal person to her!

Mrs. Fraser looked down on Charlotte even more than before. "Since Lottie is so sensible, you should go out with Ms. Warhol tomorrow and I'll accompany Lottie to the rehearsal. Everything's settled then!"

With that, she turned around with a stubborn tilt to her head and left.

Lochlan tipped up Charlotte's chin with heartache lining his features. "You shouldn't have said that, idiot."

"I don't want you to quarrel with Mrs. Fraser," Charlotte whispered. Although she was sad that her Uncle Lochlan would be accompanying some other woman, she knew that she shouldn't stand in the way of his marriage.

She forced a smile onto her face. "Let's go now. We don't want to keep Ms. Berry waiting."

*

In the suburbs.

Lochlan and Charlotte were both startled when a tall man emerged from the Bentley.

Charlotte instinctively shifted to hide behind Lochlan.

It's...

It's that scary man.

The man's powerful aura and frosty look were deeply embedded in Charlotte's mind, so she immediately tensed up upon seeing him.

She was naturally a faint-hearted person.

Lochlan patted her hand to comfort and reassure her, "There's nothing to be scared of."

He greeted Lucas next. "Mr. Nolan, it's a pleasure to meet you."

"The pleasure's mine," Lucas nodded lightly.

Then, he reached a hand into the car, but it was slapped away by Ashlyn who snapped at it, "I can get out of the car myself."

Lucas had a helpless look on his face.

Is this woman for real? The moment we're out of Grandma's sight, she treats me worse than crap.

Lochlan was slightly baffled.

What is an egoistic man such as Mr. Nolan doing with Ms. Berry?