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Confirming their relationship, just like that? Tiffany found this to be way too sudden and fast. “That’s too fast, isn’t it? I think we can still talk a little more…”

Ken denied her suggestion. “We’re all adults here. We’ll know if we’re suitable for each other at first glance. Are you free tonight? Would you do me the honor of having dinner with me?”

Tiffany had clearly lost her right to take the initiative and replied, “Okay…”

Suddenly, her phone rang. She stood up apologetically and answered the call, “Hello?”

“There’s a letter for you. I left it at the security office downstairs. Don’t forget to collect it.”

A letter? Her first guess was that George Levin had sent another letter. This was extremely important to Arianne, so of course it was important to her too. She ended the call and said to Ken, “I have to leave, I've got something urgent. We’ll play by ear tonight. Sorry!” She left the café before Ken could respond.

She was overjoyed when she collected the letter. It really was from George Levin. She hailed a cab and made her way to Arianne’s. Lillian had used the car that Mark had given away. Now, she could not sell it nor give it back.

She was gasping and panting from running all the way up to Arianne's condominium. "Letter… from… George Levin. Open it!"

Arianne poured her some water, then carelessly opened up the letter to read it. It wasn't that she wasn't anxious about it. She was simply afraid of getting disappointed after building her hopes up.

There were only a few words on the letter, just like the one before: By the time you read this letter, I will no longer be among the living. I'm sorry that I couldn't tell you the truth. There are things that I wish to protect too. Stop investigating. It won't do you any good. As long as you know that your dad was a good man, it's enough. This is my last letter. May you be happy throughout your remaining years.

Arianne slumped into the sofa after reading the letter. "George Levin is dead, probably succumbed to cancer. This letter was sent after his death. This is just great. All leads are officially cut off. Should I give up now?"

Tiffany sighed. "He's dead. You can't break into his grave and interrogate a dead man. I know that you want to know the truth so that you can clear your father's name and your own, and… to be able to straighten your spine proudly in front of Mark as a human being. I understand all of this. However, if that cannot be achieved, you can't continue living like this either. You must live your life. As for what Mark thinks of you, that's not important anymore. It's been more than ten years. How much hatred would he have left for you? If you put in more enthusiasm, he'll love you to death. Ari, don't be sad. You're pregnant, your mood is very important."

Arianne's mental state had been sharpened well by now. "I'm fine. I'm alright. Don't worry. I'm sorry that you had to come all the way here. Rest for a while. I'll wash some fruits for you."

Tiffany wanted to liven up the mood. "I've just come from a blind date. I'm surprised at how reliable my mother was this time. The man's name is Ken Warner. He's pretty good looking and has started his own

design company. He has a five bedroom house and eight figures in his bank account. He's not really my type, but I don't hate him. He wanted to confirm our relationship in our first meeting, and it gave me quite a fright. We were making plans to have dinner tonight, but I came here to give the letter to you. I'll have to contact him later."

Arianne forced a small smile. "I hope you've found a good guy this time. He sounds pretty good, and he's in the same industry as you. You can help him out in his company next time, so you guys seem pretty compatible in that sense. Try to get to know him a little better. If he's a good person, just lock it down."

Tiffany nodded, pulled out her phone and sent a message: I'm done with my chore. See you tonight.

Ken sent her the address. The pair didn't have any further interaction. Coincidentally, the address was at White Water Bay Café.

Tiffany couldn't help but feel nervous about it. "We're meeting at White Water Bay Café. How about you come with me and help me evaluate him?"

Arianne felt awkward as she replied, "That's kind of inappropriate, isn't it? Bringing your best friend along for dinner? It's like I'm going there for a free meal. How about this, I won't sit with you. I'll observe from afar."

Tiffany agreed, feeling a slight anticipation for tonight's date.

At night, Mark returned to the condominium with Rice Ball. Arianne noticed that he still seemed considerably "good-natured", so he was probably in a pretty good mood. She took advantage of that and said, "I feel like having dinner at White Water Bay Café."

He answered easily, “Sure. Get ready and we’ll go straightaway. We can bring Rice Ball along and leave it in Jackson’s office.”

This arrangement was perfect. She gleefully changed into a white short skirt and a V-neck top. The skirt hemline was hovering just above her knees and had an elastic waistband, which would not tighten over her belly. Mark completely disapproved of this skirt, “Change into a longer one. The restaurant is a bit cold. It’ll be troublesome if you catch a cold and can’t have medicine.”

She curled her lips to one side and changed into a longer skirt, finally concluding the matter.

When they arrived at White Water Bay Café, she spotted Tiffany sitting near a window at first glance. There was a man sitting in front of her too. He wasn’t exactly handsome, but his looks were moderate, and he had a distinct presence, thanks to his suit.

Tiffany spotted her as well. The pair secretly greeted each other, then went back to their own business.

Halfway through the meal, Ken excused himself to go to the washroom. Tiffany took the opportunity to move closer to Arianne. “What do you think?”

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Of course, Arianne sang praises. “Not bad, in all aspects, best to go with how you feel.”

Mark finally realized that Tiffany was here as well. It seemed like she was on a date. He nodded at her, which could be considered as a greeting.

Suddenly, a few customers scrambled out from the washroom. Then, a few staff members rushed inside all at once. It was easy to tell that something had happened. Tiffany did not see Ken coming out, and felt worried. Remembering that it was a male toilet, and it would be inconvenient for her to go in, she turned her attention to Mark, “Mark, can you help me find out what’s happened? Ken’s been inside for a while now and hasn’t come out. I think something may have happened.”

Initially, Mark had no intention of going in. However, when he saw Arianne staring expectantly at him, he got up and headed to the washroom with a grim look on his face. He weaved himself through the crowd and saw blood stains all over the floor. Jackson had pinned Ken down onto the ground and was punching him violently, as if he wasn’t holding back at all. Ken was beaten up so badly that he looked almost inhuman!

Despite being in the dark of the actual situation, he stepped forward and pulled Jackson away. “Jackson, calm down.”

Ken struggled as he crawled up from the ground. He viciously pointed at the infuriated Jackson and spat, “This is nothing but a rotten old restaurant. Just you wait! I’ll make sure that your restaurant gets shut down!”

Jackson narrowed his eyes, took off his coat and threw it aside. He seemed ready to lunge at him again, but Mark restrained him. “Let him go. Don’t start something here. We’ll deal with this later.”

Seeing this, Ken scrambled away. He didn’t even acknowledge Tiffany when he passed by the dining area. Instead, he left straightaway.

Tiffany was confused. She had seen the tragic look on Ken's face, but she couldn't understand how a trip to the washroom had turned out that way. She was even more confused when Mark emerged from the washroom with Jackson, who was covered in vicious currents, in tow, completely different from the easygoing, rich man's son image that he usually portrayed.

A short while later, all four of them were in Jackson's personal office, staring at each other in dismay. Naturally, Arianne had to be the peacemaker. "Jackson, what happened? The man you've just beaten up is Tiffie's new boyfriend…"

Tiffany was furious, but she wanted to know his reasons as well.

Jackson remained stone-faced, looking as if he wasn't in the wrong at all. "It doesn't really matter if I've beaten him up. There is no reason."

Mark was having a headache. "Arianne, take Tiffany out and get something to eat. I'll speak to Jackson."

Arianne knew that she could not pry Jackson's mouth open, so she had no choice but to leave it to Mark. Tiffany was completely enraged by Jackson's attitude. So, she turned her head away and walked out.

Mark waited until they were the only ones left in the office before asking, "Start talking. You don't usually attack."

Jackson flashed his usual hedonistic grin. "I just can't stand that guy. I overheard him while he was having a phone conversation in the washroom. He doesn't want to date Tiffany. He just wants to use her

to gain connections. I don't know how he found out about Tiffany's friendship with Arianne, but that blind date was a long, thought out plot. He's nothing but a despicable human being."

Mark paused thoughtfully and said, "Are you sure that's the reason why you punched him? I don't believe it."

Seeing that Mark had seen through him, Jackson didn't try to hide it any more, "He wanted to drug Tiffany and take her to a hotel, then tie her up. He never intended on taking responsibility. He'd use her then discard her. Every word he said was disgusting. Could you have put up with that? Tiffany is an employee in my company after all. It wouldn't have mattered if I didn't know about it. What do you think?"

Mark smirked. "You're right, but I think… That's not a good enough reason for you to attack. Let me put this harshly. I don't care if you want to fool around with women, but if you end up fooling around with someone close to Arianne, you'll have to take responsibility. I won't be civil if you mess up."

Jackson stiffened. "What are you saying? You can't possibly think that I'm interested in Tiffany, right? Are you kidding? Have you ever seen my heart flutter for any woman, after all these years? I did let her sleep next to me, but it's only because I think being alone is… pretty boring. Do you understand? I didn't do anything to her!"

Mark remained silent. He turned around and left the office. It was true, he did not find Jackson and Tiffany's "sleep" incident strange. That was because he knew Jackson's secrets very well. Everyone had their own deep and dark secrets. There was nothing to feel ashamed of. However, it was more of a habit than a secret. This time, however, he felt that it was not as simple as it seemed. Jackson had another habit — he never liked to meddle.

Mark returned to his dinner table and sat down. Tiffany couldn't hold back any longer. "What on earth was Jackson trying to do? I finally found someone that I like and he's chased him away! Just because he's rich, doesn't mean that he can do whatever he wants!"

He glanced at her and indifferently replied, "They simply had an altercation. These kinds of things are too normal among men. If there's anyone to blame, blame your potential husband for his inability. He's only good at getting beaten up."

Tiffany puffed out her cheeks in a rage, "Ari, will you look at him? He's defending Jackson! Violence is never the answer, regardless of the circumstances!"

Arianne felt helpless too. "Alright, alright. Tiffie, it's not like you're the one who beat him up. As long as you never mention your acquaintance to Jackson, Ken will not be mad at you. You can still continue getting to know each other. However, if you asked me… It was ungentlemanly of Ken to leave without even speaking to you, calling or sending a message after he left."

Tiffany was overwhelmed with frustration. "Fine, fine. I'll report back to my mother when I'm home. You two enjoy your meal. I'm exhausted. What a bad day!"

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On the way home, Arianne turned to Mark and asked, "You've spoken to Jackson right? Why'd he do it?"

Mark told her the truth. "That man is scum. Tell Tiffany to stay away from him."

She finally understood what happened. “Why didn’t you say so in the first place? I’ll tell Tiffie. But why didn’t you explain this to her straight away? That would have been simpler.”

He stared at her, as if he were looking at an idiot. “Sometimes, being straightforward makes you look like an idiot, didn’t you know? There’s nothing wrong in being tactful.”

It was eleven o’clock at night. White Water Bay Café had closed for the day. Jackson walked into the garage with his car keys in hand. He had just reached his car when a group of men suddenly appeared from the darkness. Ken emerged complacently from behind a Mercedes-Benz. “Hey, as*hole, had fun beating me up?”

Jackson stared at him expressionlessly. “You’d be lying in the hospital by now if someone hadn’t stopped me.”

Ken touched his face, which was wrapped in bandages, then spat onto the ground. “Speak, why did you hit me? I’m not planning on letting you off, but I’d like to know why. I don’t think I’ve met you before. Where did a rotten restaurant owner like yourself find the balls to do that?”

Jackson smirked. “I don’t need a reason to beat someone up. Give me your best shot.”

Ken waved his hand and more than ten men began swarming him. He had hired trained martial artists, because he had previously determined that Jackson was an adept fighter. Hence, he wasn’t careless about this at all.

Regardless of how skilled Jackson was, it was still one against more than ten men. Half an hour later, he had managed to knock down everyone else, aside from Ken. However, he wasn’t that much better off.

He could feel that at least two of his ribs were broken, and his left wrist had been dislocated. Fortunately, he was still standing.

Ken stared at him as if he were looking at a monster. “You’re lucky that you’re fierce!”

Jackson wiped the blood off his face and walked towards Ken. “Your turn.”

Ken hobbled into his vehicle and retreated by speeding off in his car. Jackson didn’t run after him. Instead, he leaned against his car and slumped down. Then, he called Mark. He did not immediately call 911 because he was afraid the media and his mother, Summer West, might find out. He did not want to turn this into a huge scandal.

Arianne had just fallen asleep when Mark’s phone rang. He was afraid of startling her, so he answered the phone a second later. He lowered his voice and asked, “What is it?”

Jackson took a deep breath. “I’ve been attacked, I’m at the garage at White Water Bay Café…”

Mark shivered, ended the phone call and ran out of the door.

In the afternoon on the very next day, Ken knelt in front of Jackson’s bed. “I really didn’t know that it was you… I was blind! Please spare me, just this once. How about you beat me up, just to vent your anger?”

Mrs. West, who was standing next to him, snapped angrily, “My son is lying in a hospital bed. How is he supposed to beat you up? This is the first time I’ve ever met anyone who’d openly oppose the West family. On top of that, it’s someone like you! My son is a rotten restaurant owner, is he? You only have one rotten company under your belt, what right do you have to push people around? I’ll make sure that your company burns to the ground today! One more thing, please kneel in prison instead. Scum like you are nothing but walking disasters!”

Jackson giggled at the sight of Mrs. West’s angry face. Mrs. West shot him a glare. “I sent you to learn martial arts for self-defense, and look at how badly you’ve ended up? Was it an asset to you at all? And you’re still laughing!”

Jackson promptly stopped giggling. Mrs. West turned towards the bodyguard at the doorway and waved her hand. Two bodyguards immediately dragged Ken out. Jackson was silently grumbling about Mark. He did not want Mrs. West to find out of this matter, yet Mark couldn’t keep his mouth shut!

Mrs. West calmed herself and changed the topic of conversation. “Son, I’ve done a thorough investigation over the matter. Was it all for the sake of a girl?”

Jackson’s expression immediately turned serious. He knew that it would be difficult to conclude the situation once she found out about it. “Mom, it had nothing to do with her. Don’t get involved.”

Mrs. West smirked. “Don’t get involved? As long as it concerns you, I will be involved. I’d certainly love to see what this alluring lady who’s managed to enthrall you into losing your wits, is really like. This is the first time this has ever happened in many years. You stay in that bed. Since you’ve ended up battered and bruised for the sake of this girl, she should be the one to take care of you!”

Mrs. West had always been swift and decisive in her actions. Whatever she says, goes. Jackson surrendered himself to fate. His mother was the only nemesis he’s ever had. Mrs. West was usually kind,

virtuous, warm and exceedingly gentle. However, when faced with things like this, her temper would explode and he would not be able to stop her!

Tiffany's home.

Tiffany heard a knock on the door. Thinking that it was a delivery, she opened the door in her baggy pajamas and unkempt hair. She was shocked when she saw Mrs. West. Only one phrase appeared in her mind like an alarm bell — a wealthy woman with well-kept grace and charm!

In comparison to Lillian, Mrs. West was really on a whole other level. Lilian did not have Mrs. West's presence.

"Madam, may I ask, whom are you here to see?" Tiffany asked carefully.

Mrs. West did not give her an immediate answer. She sized her up from top to toe, then automatically entered the house. She scanned its surroundings before carelessly replying, "I'm here to see you. My Jackson has suffered a beating. You'll have to go to the hospital and take care of him. Don't ask why. He's happily volunteered to suffer because of you. I can't be bothered to nag him about it."

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Tiffany's mind was full of questions as she asked, "Wait, you're… Jackson West's mother? It's nice to meet you, Mrs. West. I am acquainted with him. He's my boss, and a friend of my friend's husband. However… I'm not too certain of the situation."

Mrs. West pulled out a document that was filled with words from her back. “I can’t be bothered to explain this to you. Look at it yourself. This is all the information I’ve been given.”

Tiffany was sweating. She took the file and read it thoroughly, her gaze became increasingly stern. The document described everything clearly, from Jackson’s violent beating against Ken in White Water Bay Café to everything that happened after that. She had mixed feelings about this. So, Jackson had attacked someone because of her? And he ended up suffering retaliation for it too…

“I’m sorry, Mrs. West… I never meant for it to turn out this way… I didn’t even know why he attacked that man. Which hospital is he in? I’ll pay him a visit,” she said, summoning up her courage.

“A visit? You’re going to conclude this after one visit? You’re the one who caused Jackson to break off his engagement, aren’t you? Why are you acting as if it has nothing to do with you? It doesn't matter if your social status is unmatched, as long as my son likes you. You don’t have to feel pressured. From now on, you'll go to the hospital and take care of him. If things go well between the two of you, you will be my daughter-in-law. If not, you’ll receive a satisfactory break-up fee.” Mrs. West was very blunt. It shocked Tiffany so much that she was dumbfounded.

Tiffany had no way of explaining these things, so she decided against it. The most important matter at hand was to check on Jackson. She was glad that Lillian wasn’t home. If she were, she would try to worm her way into the West family’s good graces.

After being personally dragged by Mrs. West all the way to the hospital, Tiffany was too afraid to relax. When she dropped her off at the hospital entrance, Mrs. West did not follow her inside. “You go on in, I won’t be following you. Let me give you a reminder, if I don’t see you the next time I’m here, I will come knocking on your door.”

Was that a threat? Tiffany found Mrs. West very cool for some reason, despite the fact that she was threatening her…

“Yes, yes, yes. I’ll stay in the hospital and be at his beck and call. Don’t worry.” She nodded vigorously like a chick pecking on rice. She wasn’t all that willing to be obedient, but Mrs. West had a terrifying presence.

Mrs. West scoffed icily, then drove the car away. Tiffany heaved a sigh of relief, bought some fruits nearby and brought them into the ward. When she walked in, Jackson sighed when he saw her. “You actually came. Ignore my mother. You can go home.”

Honestly, when Tiffany saw Jackson, she couldn’t help feeling guilty. She’d stay here even without Mrs. West’s threats. “That’s enough out of you. Quit pretending. There’s no one to take care of you here. Let me do it. I took care of my father all on my own when he got sick. You won’t end up suffering by my hand. Don’t worry.”

Jackson found it very funny. “As long as you leave, my mom will send someone over. So you don’t have to suffer here.”

Tiffany pretended not to hear him. She walked towards the window and stared outside. Things were still pretty awkward between the two of them. She was used to being casual and hated the current atmosphere. It was too awkward.

After a while, Jackson spoke up, “I attacked because I just couldn’t stand that guy. It didn’t have anything to do with you. You don’t need to feel guilty.”

All her feelings of awkwardness were swept away when she heard him saying this. “Yes, Mr. West, you’re always right. Is that good enough for you? I never said anything about you doing anything for me… However, I really have to thank you. If it weren’t for you, I would’ve been taken for a rice. Seeing as you’ve been bringing lunch for me and even helped me teach an as*hole a lesson, I’ll wash your pee and poop for you. You don’t need to feel guilty about that either…”

Jackson’s face turned very black. “Woman, can’t you have some decorum with your words? I certainly haven’t reached the stage where I need your help in… taking care of my toiletry needs. Seriously, go about on your own business. Stop poking your nose in here.”

She shot him a glare. “Your mother said that if I’m not around during her next visit, she’ll come looking for me herself. I can tell that your mom is the decision-maker in your home. Your words don’t hold water. Don’t be so modest with me. Just call me when you need something. I’m going to get some shuteye. I’m feeling sleepy.” Then, she walked to the sofa and laid down. Her attitude made everything clear.

Jackson didn’t insist any further. He was confined to the bed and couldn’t move at all. The only thing that he could move was his neck.

It was inevitable that his bladder would fill up quickly, as he was administered with an intravenous drip. Soon, he could no longer hold it in, so he gritted his teeth and pressed the call button. A nurse quickly pushed the door open and walked in. “Are you feeling uncomfortable, Mr. West?”

When faced with the eagerly attentive nurse, he felt no sense of shame at all. “I need… to relieve my bladder…”

The nurse blushed. She picked up a small urinal and reached under the covers. Tiffany couldn't get any deep sleep due to the air-conditioning in the room. She woke up immediately and witnessed the entire thing. She rubbed her eyes, stepped forward and asked, "Why didn't you wake me?"

Surrounded by two women, Jackson shut his eyes and surrendered. "Go to sleep…"

Tiffany rolled her eyes at him and took the urinal from the nurse. "It's alright now. Go back to whatever you were doing."

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The nurse seemed rather resentful, but she didn't say anything about it. She turned around to leave. After all, if a patient had someone to take care of him, she wouldn't need to take care of him.

A few minutes later, Tiffany's hand was getting sore. "Can you actually do it? Use a urinary catheter if you can't pee. Don't force yourself…"

Jackson's face turned red then white. "You're the one who 'can't do it'... You're a girl. Don't you feel embarrassed by all of this? You've even mentioned that you were the one who took care of your dad when he was sick. Isn't it inappropriate, even if you are his daughter? It wouldn't be so bad if it were your mom instead…"

Tiffany replied in self-mockery, "My mom? If my dad could actually rely on her, he wouldn't have to suffer that much while he was alive. My mom is a woman whose only talent lies in enjoying life. Even though I'm the one in dire straits now, it's still the same. All she knows is to cry about it. I'd still have to do it, regardless of how awkward it is. After all, when my dad went bankrupt… we didn't have any money to hire help. Besides, you don't need to feel embarrassed. You weren't embarrassed at all in front of that nurse. You were even comfortable enough to let her take care of you. Why is it so different with me? Is it because my looks are not to your taste?"

Jackson didn't know why he wasn't embarrassed in front of the nurse either. Perhaps it was because it was her job. Tiffany wasn't a medical staff member. He really wasn't comfortable with her taking care of him…

After great difficulty, he managed to accomplish his job. He was so depressed that he didn't want to say anything more. Tiffany casually took the urinal and walked into the toilet to clean it. She was even humming a soft melody. "Shut up!" He snapped through gritted teeth.

Tiffany's brazen giggles echoed from the toilet. That's right, she was laughing at him.

Jackson stayed in the hospital for half a month, so Tiffany took care of him for half a month, and she was very careful with it too. In the end, he stopped struggling. He went from awkward and ashamed to letting nature take its course. After his discharge, he had to recuperate at home, so he couldn't go to the office for the time being. Luckily, Mrs. West didn't force Tiffeny into taking care of him at home too.

…

Arianne had put off her medical check up due to Rice Ball's illness. She waited until Rice Ball's condition had stabilized before going to the hospital, with Mark by her side.

Mark did not seem excited about it at all, as if the child had nothing to do with him.

Arianne didn't care. She knew that he still couldn't let go of that affair and suspected that the child didn't belong to him. She tried her best to avoid bringing up any sensitive topics in front of him. The two of them had been walking on eggshells anyway.

When they arrived at the hospital and did an ultrasound, the doctor turned to Mark and said, "Come, have a look. You're having twins! They're both very healthy too!"

Mark, who was standing at the doorway, had no intention of going inside. He simply turned his head to one side and looked at the screen of the machine. A vague image of two little lives, moving around could be seen on the ultrasound.

Arianne jumped in shock when she heard that she was having twins. She finally understood why her belly had grown so rapidly. She was worried that she wouldn't be able to carry these two precious lives, so she asked, "Doctor, is my body alright? Will these two babies arrive healthily?"

"If your body isn't healthy enough, it can be supplemented during your pregnancy," The doctor replied calmly. There's no need to worry too much. However, a pregnancy with twins requires extra care. Take good care of yourself, and don't over exhaust yourself."

Mark's silent attitude bemused the doctor. The doctor who was conducting the ultrasound took a few more glances at him, and felt sorry for Arianne at the same time.

After the examination, Mark walked in front while Arianne slowly followed behind. Their positioning did seem rather strange. No pregnant woman would be treated so coldly.

When they got into the car, Mark remained silent. He simply sent her back to the ground floor of her condominium building. When she got down from the car, Arianne calmly said, “I can go upstairs on my own. You don’t have to come with me. Go ahead and do whatever you need to do.” She did not look at him, nor wait for his reaction. Instead, she left immediately after getting down from the car.

Of course, Mark didn’t go with her. When she arrived home, Arianne took a picture of the ultrasound report and sent it to Tiffany. “I’ve just had an ultrasound. The babies are fine. I’m having twins.”

Tiffany was so excited that she called her immediately. “Is it true? The doctor never mentioned anything about twins at first. Your belly sure is all for the win! Did Mark go with you?”

Arianne paused for two seconds after hearing Mark’s name before replying, “Yes, I’m a little tired. I’m going to take a nap.”

She laid on the bed after ending the call, staring up at the ceiling, feeling a little bewildered. Mark’s reaction at the hospital appeared in her mind’s eye continuously. Yes, he was too apathetic. He had a grudge against her, which carried onto her children as well.

The next day, she woke up early. After settling Rice Ball’s needs, she went to work via public transportation. Mark did not come back to her condominium last night, and she did not want to wait for him to send her to work.

She was tired and sweaty by the time she arrived at the office. She felt uncontrollably frustrated too. She had to calm down for a moment before feeling comfortable again.

Eric had been taking good care of her. He would only give her very little work every day. Sometimes he would even pour her a glass of water. The more this went on, the more disappointed she felt. It was a disappointment towards Mark. Outsiders were capable of achieving such levels of care and concern, how could he be so cold and indifferent?

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Her level of disappointment surprised her. Why should she be feeling disappointed? She shouldn't be holding out on hope in the first place. She should continue on as she always had — stay close yet keep a distance at the same time, right?

At lunchtime, a distinctive figure appeared at the office entrance. The employees who had been preparing to go out for lunch, stopped in their footsteps and gawked. This was because Mark was too attractive. Most importantly, he was holding an exquisite thermal lunch box.

The new company mostly consisted of new staff. Most of them had never seen Mark, so they were making guesses at whose "noble husband" he was. When he arrived at Arrianne's desk, everyone finally came to their senses, sighed and slowly dispersed.

"What are you doing here?" Arianne's current mood could be described as shock at this point.

"Lunch time," he did not say too much, and opened up the thermal lunch box. Then, he pushed a fork and knife into her hands. The thermal lunch box was packed with stew, grilled chicken and vegetables. The very sight of them would make anyone salivate with hunger.

Arianne didn't say very much either. She ate a small portion under his watchful eye, and left a considerable amount of leftovers.

“I asked Mary to make this. Does it not suit your tastes?” he asked with a frown.

“It’s not that… I just think that it’s too bland. There’s no need to bring food for me at the office. I can eat at the canteen.” She wouldn’t dare dream of having him visit her at the office to bring lunch for her every day. If he wanted to do it purely for show, there was no need. He only had to ask someone to send her lunch over. That would be enough to garner praise.

“It wasn’t my idea.” Mary insisted. “Don’t be ungrateful,” Mark replied with a deadpan expression as he packed up the lunch.

Arianne’s frustrations returned, like a flood released from the gates of a dam. She could no longer hold herself back. “When have you become so obedient to Mary? You’re the master of the Tremont household. Mary is still a maid at the end of the day. You don’t have to show off. I’ve only sung your praises in front of everyone else, that you’ve been very good to me and that you’re pretty much perfect. If I ever say anything vicious about the man who’s brought me up, I’d be considered an ingrate!”

Eric stepped out from his office, having overheard their voices. “Mark? What are you doing here? Are you fighting?”

Mark’s expression sank. He turned around and left without another word.

Eric watched Mark walk away, as if in deep thought. “Pregnant women certain have short tempers… He was nice enough to give food for you, but you angered him into leaving. However, I can understand. That’s just how it’s like to be pregnant, you’d get emotional all of a sudden.”

Arianne agreed that she had lost herself at that moment, but she couldn't control it. "I never asked him to leave. He's not that free anyway."

Eric patted her on the shoulder. "Alright. He's had a lot to deal with lately too, taking time out to take care of you. He's been under a lot of pressure. Don't fight with him. He didn't even have the time to visit Jackson when he was in the hospital for half a month. From what I know, everything he's done is solely for you. No one has ever enjoyed such treatment. If you're not happy, you have plenty of time to slowly teach him. You're pregnant, don't get too riled up. Get some rest. There's still work to do in the afternoon."

Tiffany arrived to pick Arianne up after work.

When they arrived at her condominium, Tiffany busied herself. First, she cleaned the condominium from top to toe, and even changed the bedsheets and washed the clothes.

Seeing her drenched in sweat from all of that work, Arianne couldn't help saying, "That's enough. I can do all of these chores on my own over the weekend. Have a short break then hurry home. Otherwise, your mother will quibble with you again."

Tiffany waved her hand. "I'm not tired, it's paid work anyway. Don't worry, my mom's gone out to play mahjong. She won't be back for dinner. Are you hungry? Would you like something to eat?"

Paid work? Arianne teased. "What do you mean by 'paid work'? I'd treat you to a meal after helping me out like this. Is that enough to bribe you?"

Tiffany chuckled. “A certain someone won’t let me tell you this, but we’re best friends. I’ll betray him then. Mark called me before I came to pick you up, and asked me to take care of you. He’s also asked me to try to stay back at night and keep you company because he’s going to be busy over the next few days and can’t take care of you. I never thought that he’d ever speak up to ask for help. I agreed on account of the fact that he had bought me a car.”

Arianne fell silent, unsure of what to say. If she and Mark could have had such detailed communication in the past, perhaps things wouldn’t have been so bad between them. However, he had never opened his heart to her ever since she was a child.

After dinner, Tiffany began swiping her phone out of boredom and suddenly found news on Mark. She opened it and felt worried after reading through it. “Ari, I think Mark’s international companies are facing bankruptcy and may be closed down for good. I think he’s asked me to keep you company because he’s gone out of the country to take care of the aftermath.”

Arianne had never heard of words like “bankrupt” or “closed down for good” associated with Mark. “Is that true? He personally took over those international companies three years ago. Logically speaking, they should have pretty solid foundations. How could they close down?”

Tiffany handed the phone over to her. “I’m not sure. It wasn’t fully described in detail in the news. Mark didn't give much of an elaboration during his interview. This was an estimation from the media. It’s suspected that his reputation is damaged. The exact reason isn’t completely stated. You should ask him when he comes back.”

Arianne’s heart was beginning to lose its grip. Mark had always been mindful of public opinion. How could he possibly have allowed his reputation to falter?

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In the middle of the night, she sent a message to Mark after a bout of hesitation: Are you busy? I've heard that something's happened to your international companies.

She chose to send that message in the middle of the night due the time difference in a foreign country. Both parties had to work together for a relationship to grow. It didn't make sense if she didn't show him any concern.

After more than five minutes, his reply finally arrived: I don't need your concern. Just take care of yourself.

She reread the message on the phone screen a few times, growing increasingly depressed each time she read it. She was being nice by asking him a question and yet, he still treated her that way. She shouldn't have asked in the first place!

The next day, news of Mark's international company continued to spread. There was even a video interview of him, officially announcing his company's closure. The overseas subsidiary branches of his company weren't the only ones affected. The offices in the country were affected as well. The general reason was that all industries under the Tremont family had displayed many problems, which tarnished his reputation. For example, someone had discovered fake products in a jewelry store under the Tremont family, and there were even cases of tax evasion. The entire world was abuzz with his scandal.

Arianne grew extremely worried when she heard the news. Mark was human, not a god. There were bound to be things beyond his management. How was he going to come back from all of this, when everything had developed into such a stage all of a sudden?

Arianne's colleagues swarmed her when she arrived at the office. Everyone was talking over each other and asking her, "Has something happened to your family? I've heard that someone purchased fake

goods! Why would you produce fake goods? Has something happened to the company finances? What on earth is going on? Why would you avoid taxes if you're so rich… That's not true, right?"

Their words pierced Arianne's ears. She refused to let other people insult Mark like that, "You said it yourselves, it's all rumors. The Tremont family has a large fortune and receives public praise in every aspect. Why would we need to hurt others just to benefit ourselves? Lacking funds is even less likely. If Mark were opportunistic enough to use his many years of hard-earned reputation and foundation as a cover for producing fake goods and selling them at sky-high prices, he'd be digging his own grave. I don't think he'd do anything that obvious! If you're that keen on understanding the situation, I'd suggest paying attention to the news. There's no use asking me."

Eric stood at his office door and raised his voice, "Don't you have anything better to do?@ Don't you think that it's a bit senseless for you to put your salaries on the line just to worry about someone who's worth more than ten billion dollars? Arianne, come into my office. I need to speak to you."

Arianne got up and followed Eric into his office. Eric was afraid that her mood might get affected, so he put on an easy smile and said, "It's alright. Mark can take care of things on his own. He would never have done those things mentioned in the news and just needs time to investigate. I've told you before, someone's attacking him on purpose. Schemes in the business world are more terrifying than you could ever imagine. Don't worry about what others say."

She took a deep breath. "There's no need to console me. I'm not as fragile as you think. How long do you think it'll take to solve this matter?"

Eric paused thoughtfully and said, "This matter is a much bigger issue, so I'm afraid that it'd be impossible to settle it too soon. At least a few months, at most a year and a half or more. It's all quite possible. My suggestion — move back into the Tremont Estate so someone can take care of you. It's expected that Mark wouldn't be able to take care of you. A man's career… Is very important to him. Otherwise, how will he have the confidence to face his wife and child? Don't stress. It will be alright."

She never considered moving back to the Tremont Estate. Life had been pretty good in the condominium. Tiffany usually took good care of her so she didn't have much to worry about.

When work ended, it was Henry who had arrived to pick her up. "Madam, come home with me. I've taken care of Rice Ball. This is an instruction from Mr. Tremont."

Arianne objected. "I don't want to go back. I like staying outside." When she lived in the Tremont Estate, the empty and lonely house always made her very uncomfortable, especially when Mark wasn't around.

Henry glanced at her bump and insisted. "Mrs. Tremont, this is no time to be stubborn. You're pregnant and on your own. It's going to be very inconvenient if you stay outside the house. Mary has been worried about you. Come home. Mr. Tremont has sent a message to say that you don't need to go to this office during the end of this month and take care of your babies. After all, you're pregnant with two children, there's nothing wrong with taking extra precaution."

Arianne hesitated when she remembered Mary since she was like a mother to her. She didn't want to worry her, and certainly didn't want to make things worse for Mark at a time like this. After a bout of hesitation, she nodded, got into the car and sent a message to Tiffany to tell her that she had gone back to the Tremont Estate.

Nothing seems to have changed in the large mansion, despite her many months of absence. The flowers in the rear garden were blooming splendidly and the air was filled with a flowery fragrance.

Mary was overjoyed when she saw that Arianne had returned. "When I found out that you were coming home, I cooked your favorite dishes, just for you. Get some rest, get some rest. Dinner will be ready soon."

Arianne’s heart was filled with warmth. “Alright.”

She felt a little sleepy after dinner, so she went to bed early. Just as she turned to her side, she felt something moving in her belly. It felt like a butterfly, fluttering its wings and at the same time, like a little fish, blowing bubbles. She excited and carefully placed her hand on her belly. Then, she felt another wave of tiny movements. The babies were kicking, these were her babies’ very first movements!

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Arianne could not help wanting to share the joy. It felt magical. The first person she thought of was Mark but she didn't text him, afraid that he was busy. Instead, she could only tell Tiffany.

After chatting with Tiffany for a while, she felt her eyelids growing heavy, falling asleep unknowingly.

Arianne had no idea how long it had been when she vaguely heard someone opening the door. She had not yet gotten used to the fact that she had just returned to the Tremont Estate and sleepily thought that she was still in her apartment. She was exceptionally cautious when she stayed alone, worried about thugs barging in, so she woke up with a startle at once. “Who is it?!”

The room’s light was turned on suddenly as Mark looked at her in fatigue. He stood on the spot, carefully not to step forward. “It’s me. Go back to sleep, I’m going to take a shower.”

Breathing in relief, Arianne adjusted herself and lay down, closing her eyes again.

It was only then that Mark made his way to the bathroom. He was shocked as well. He was already being super gentle, surprised that Arianne was still frightened.

Listening to the water in the bathroom, Arianne was unable to sleep again. She did not expect Mark to come home tonight, thinking that he would stay abroad for some time.

After the shower, Mark was slightly astounded when he saw Arianne who was still awake. “I’ll go to the study and will be sleeping there as well. You have the bed to yourself.”

The exhaustion in his eyes was evident. Arianne could see it. She shifted herself to the side, making room for him. “Work tomorrow. Come over and sleep.”

Mark stood still. “No… It’s not convenient.” He was scared looking at her tummy. What if he accidentally bumped it when he was sleeping? He dared not imagine. In addition, Arianne was now a light sleeper. She could be woken up just from him turning sides.

As if realizing something, Arianne found an excuse. “My lower back hurts, I can’t sleep.”

It was only then that Mark lay down on the bed and rubbed her lower back for her gently. Around two minutes later, Arianne spoke, “Okay, let’s sleep. I’ll wake you up if I feel sore again later.”

Mark turned off the light and nudged himself farther away from her. His eyes shut swiftly and his breathing became stable, sleep came quick to him.

Arianne's lower back did not hurt at all. She felt that she was still active despite being four months into her pregnancy. She just did not want him to go to sleep in the study room. He could not even sleep properly there, and he was already so tired…

Naturally, she did not wake him up through the night. Before Mark woke up in the morning, Arianne had already gotten up and gently went downstairs to wash up. After breakfast, Butler Henry drove her to the office. There were only a few days left until the end of the month. She had to finish up the tasks she had on hand.

Around ten in the morning, the front desk called her downstairs. Thinking that Mary had come earlier to send her lunch, Arianne left her work to go down but she didn't see Mary. It was too early.

The front desk staff pointed to the guest meeting room not far away and said, "Over there. She said that she's your younger sister and needs to see you. I didn't know that you have a sister…"

Younger sister? Arianne looked somber. Other than Aery, she could not think of anyone else.

Pushing the door open, Aery was seated on the couch prettily while drinking the coffee that the front desk had served. She said pretentiously, "Arianne, poor thing, you have to work to feed yourself despite being pregnant."

"What are you doing here?" Arianne sat down in front of her and asked icily.

Aery pursed her lips. “Can’t I look for you if nothing’s up? But I actually have something. My mom gave you a lot of things huh? She didn’t give me a penny from the assets that she’s gotten after the divorce. I asked her but she said she got none. It’s probably given to you. I must be right, right?”

Arianne was uninterested in Helen’s assets but if Aery was asking them from her, she did not mind having the interest. “Yeah, Helen gave me a property and a bank card. I didn’t check how much is in there but I don’t think there’s a lot. The Kinseys nearly went bankrupt previously, how long has it been? The recuperation won’t happen so fast. If I were Helen, I wouldn't divorce so soon. It’s not like I could get a lot out of it.”

Aery blanched. “You’re really audacious for an orphan who Mark took in. Don’t think there’s a lot? I’ll have you know that the card that Helen gave you contains at least several hundred thousand dollars and the properties that she’s gotten are villas worth over hundred thousand dollars as well!”

Shrugging, Arianne asked, “So what? Are you asking them back from me? Helen left the Kinseys. What she’s gotten belongs to her individually. You can’t intervene with who she wanted to give them to. Seeking me right now, I only see you as ridiculous.”

Aery breathed in deeply to suppress her rage. She still had a trump card. “Don’t gloat. I’ll take back what you have sooner or later. My mom only has one daughter, that’s me. You’re the ridiculous one. You said that you don’t want anything to do with mom but you accept the money she gave you. Shameless! And here I thought that you’re prideful! You hypocrite! There’s one more thing that I’m coming for today…” As Aery spoke, she took out a watch from her purse. “Mark left this. It’s also his favorite watch. Return it to him for me.”

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Looking at the watch, Arianne’s breath halted for a moment as she paled instantly. She was familiar with that watch, it was the one that Mark wore usually. She did not pay attention if anything was missing on his wrist when he came home last night… It also meant that he was with Aery before he came back to the Tremont Estate.

Taking in her change of expression, Aery placed the watch in front of her in contempt. “Don’t blame Mark, darling. He’s under a lot of pressure recently and you’re pregnant. It’s not convenient… Even if it’s not me, he’ll have other women too. You’ll be upset either way. I’m doing your duty for you, you don’t have to thank me though.”

Arianne picked up the watch and got up. “I'm going back to work if there’s nothing else.”

Fulfilling her goal, there was no need for Aery to stay longer. “Sure, tell Eric that his new company looks decent. Wish him a bright future for me.”

Returning to her desk, Arianne’s thoughts were complicated as she looked at the watch. After a while, she kept the watch and went back to work. Since it was Mark’s, she should return it to its rightful owner.

When she got back to the Tremont Estate at night, Mary had already prepared a steaming dinner. “Ari, wash your hands and eat. I heard sir saying that you think the dishes were too mild the last time, so I added some spice today. The elders say that it’s a son if you crave sour things while it’s a daughter if you crave spicy stuff. There must be two little girlies in your tummy!”

Arianne was not in the mood to joke. The watch in her purse felt like a ticking time bomb. “Mama Mary, is Mark coming home for dinner?”

Mary shook her head. “He called home, he’s not coming back to eat. He did say to ask you to sleep earlier after dinner and don’t wait up for him. Don’t worry, he’ll come home no matter how late it is with you here.”

After dinner, Arianne played with Rice Ball for a bit before going back to her room. She felt lighter after showering. Time passed slowly as she tried to force herself to stay awake. She wanted to wait for him to come home and return the watch to him personally.

It was nearly one at night when Mark's car arrived at the Tremont Estate. He was slightly surprised when he discovered that Arianne was still wide awake sitting on the bed when he entered the bedroom. "Why aren't you asleep yet?"

Arianne took the watch out and passed it to him. "In case you're still sleeping when I wake up tomorrow, it's not good to disturb you. So I waited until you're home to pass this to you. Aery asked me to give it back to you."

Looking at the watch, Mark's gaze darkened a little. He didn't take it. "Leave it there, I'm going to shower."

Watching him enter the bathroom, Arianne frowned. This was his reaction? He did not look like he was going to explain…

Tossing the watch on the nightstand in annoyance, she lay down on her side. When Mark came out wrapped with a towel, she shifted herself to the side and said in a muffled voice, "I can't control that you and Aery are still together but please ask her not to come to me next time. I'm not alone now, I have babies in my tummy. I don't want my mood to be spoiled. I'm not asking you to be a good husband or a good father but I'm not going over the line in requesting these things that are feasible, right?"

Mark sat down by the bed and sighed audibly. "I met her when I was abroad. She said that she was there to travel and met me in coincidence, pestered me for a meal. I had a client at that time, I can't say much. I didn't know when I lost the watch nor why it's with her."

Arianne kept quiet. He did not explain just now but after his shower. Was he thinking of an excuse while he showered? Aery's words were brimming with intimacy with him. She was no fool!

After a moment, Mark got up to switch off the light in the room. Their breathing was distinct in the dark but it was somehow discordant tonight.

A period of silence later, he asked, "Not asleep yet?"

Not wanting to talk to him, Arianne turned around as a reply that she was unable to sleep!

"I really didn't, stop imagining things. I said that I won't contact her, I mean what I said. From then on, I've never contacted her." Mark's tone had a tinge of helplessness and fatigue.

"True, you didn't contact her. She's been the one contacting you. And you, you refuse nobody!" Arianne's muffled voice seemed to be stained with a sob as it sounded incredibly sad. It did not feel right, so she switched to another tone and continued. "You know that I don't like you having anything to do with her. Other women are fine, but not her. Other than giving me the watch, she also said that she'd make me return everything that Helen gave me. It's impossible. I don't want Helen's things but if that's what Aery wants, I won't let go."

In the dark, Mark's hand went to her hips. After a two-second pause, he moved it away. "I didn't welcome just anyone. It's the situation I was in. Alright, you should sleep first. It's too late."

The next day, Arianne woke up late. Mark was actually earlier than her. If it had been the past, this would never happen. After getting pregnant, her sleeping time was no longer in her control. Arianne was surprised to find out that Mark did not wear the watch that Aery returned, he had instead changed into one that was the same brand and had a similar color.

Going to the yard, she greeted Henry who was trimming the branches. “Morning, Uncle Henry.”

Henry glimpsed at the sun above his head. “It’s not morning anymore… Madam, you seem to be in a good mood today.”

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It was not bad indeed. Arianne picked up Rice Ball with a smile. “I’m late anyway, I won’t be going to the office this morning. I’ll go after lunch.”

Heavy footsteps were suddenly heard behind her. Arianne put down Rice Ball subconsciously, knowing that it was Mark who came. He was going to chastise her for carrying Rice Ball for sure, to the extent that it was scarring her.

“Stop touching that dumb cat. I’m going to the office. Have Henry send you if you’re going out.” Mark was leaving in a hurry, his pace slightly hasty. He did not even button his sleeves. When the golden sun showered on him, there was a sense of divinity that kept one’s eyes on him.

Arianne pursed her lips and went to the kitchen to ask food from Mary. She was starving.

In the Kinsey's villa, Aery had unprecedentedly busied herself in the kitchen for the entire morning. It was solely because Helen was coming over for lunch.

Jean was gloomy sitting on the couch. Since their divorce, he felt incapable of managing the company. Being married for so many years, it had always been Helen who helped him with both work and family matters. He was basically a boss twiddling his thumbs. Before he got married, his elders were still around and the company did not need his concern. He had been lounging and carefree prior, thinking that Helen would never leave him, but he gradually realized now that he had turned into a good-for-nothing throughout these years. Leaving Helen, each step of his was a challenge.

The father and daughter pair had different thoughts in mind. Jean wanted to salvage his marriage while Aery knew Helen well, understanding that it was impossible for the woman to turn back. She only wanted the assets in the woman's hands.

Past eleven in the morning, Helen stepped into the Kinsey's for the first time after the divorce. Jean had specifically changed into an expensive suit and looked kempt from head to toe. Helen had mentioned that she liked it the best when he was wearing a suit. After not caring for years, he finally complied.

"Mom, come on and eat. I've cooked personally today and didn't let the housekeeper help. Come try my cooking!" Aery said cutely.

"I'll wash my hands first." Helen was indifferent. She no longer had the initial passion for this home.

Jean went up to carry her purse for her, she did not refuse him.

After a while, three of them sat at the dining table. Jean and Aery helped her with the dishes incessantly but Helen could see their ulterior motives right away. She did not pick up the cutlery. Speaking instead, “You can speak what’s on your mind forthrightly. Aery, you’ve never cooked once in your whole life. Has the sun risen from the west today? And you, Jean, you never wear suits at home and usually say that it’s uncomfortable.”

Being exposed, Aery stopped putting up a front. “Mom, I heard that you’ve gone to Arianne after you left and gave her money and a house. Even when those are the assets you get after your divorce with dad, those belong to us. How could you give them to an outsider?”

Jean, who had only found out, looked upset instantly. “What? Helen, you’ve given the house and money that I’ve given you to Arianne?! Those belong to the Kinseys! How can you give them to an outsider?!”

Helen replied faintly, “Belong to the Kinseys? Yeah, according to the law, those are assets that I’ve gotten from the Kinseys. Before the divorce, they belonged to the Kinseys, but after the divorce, they belong to me. Jean, ask yourself honestly, haven’t I painstakingly earned what the Kinseys have now? What I’ve taken is insignificant, how much have you kept hidden? It’s cited that I took eighty percent of the savings but it’s not even half of it in reality. I know it, I just don’t want to fight with you, because compared to the wealth, I’d rather leave this cage.”

“It’s a trap in asking me here for lunch today, isn’t it? Let me make myself clear, reconciliation is impossible. What I, Helen Cameran, have decided, I won’t turn back. And you, Aery. Don’t think that I don’t know what you’re thinking. You’ve gotten too much all your life. I don’t owe you anything. Now, every penny I have has nothing to do with you. You’re an adult now. I don’t have the duty to keep taking care of you. What I give Arianne is none of your business as well. Not only that, I’ve opened up a small company. The company will belong to Arianne in the future, don’t you even think about it!”

Aery had been thinking about achieving her goals with her usual cutesy but hearing what Helen said, she could no longer hold herself back. Her cute tone changed as well. “Hah… That’s funny. The one indebted to Arianne is you, not me. Why are you making it up to her with things that belong to me?! You aren’t

only her mother, you're my mother too. You can't take things from the Kinseys and give them to her! She's good, she snatched the man I love and my mom, I shouldn't have let her off in the first place!"

Aside from disappointment, Helen felt hopeless for Aery. "Aery, I've spoiled you too much. That's why you turn into how you are today. I'm warning you, I won't spare you if you dare lay a finger on Arianne. I won't allow you to keep making mistakes! It's only now that I know how revolting and conscienceless I've been in the past!"