

Shadows 491

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Based on everything she knew, Jude was supposed to be the leader of the seventh - ranked assassin group. He was the CEO of DY Group, and he was the head of the Bells. Besides, he had an assassin crew handling all the messes. That alone made him a big deal. But now he was telling her that Hard Corps Uprising - the most feared, untouchable assassin group - was his? What the heck! This was totally unexpected to Tilda. Hard Corps Uprising was a total mystery, and so was its leader.

The group was so secretive that even Tilda had never tracked down who ran it, and not even Andy had a clue. It was an absolute taboo on the dark web. Nobody ever messed with them. And Jude was the man behind it. "I'm not showing off or making this up." I always hoped you'd figure it out yourself. But since I already knew about your identity as the Dark Web Queen, I thought you deserved to hear it straight from me. " " But ... Jude, aren't you the leader of the seventh - ranked assassin group ... As Tilda was sending this message, she paused. She suddenly thought of something.

"That's just your cover? " " The best hunters never reveal their final hand. 11 " He'll use the most convenient mask to put his prey at ease, until they walk right into his trap. " When they realize it, it's already too late. " No one's ever found out who leads the number one group - or what he even looks like. " For me, being the CEO of DY Group and leader of the seventh - ranked assassin crew lets me 2/4 18:31 Tue, Sep 30 Damn it.

Tilda couldn't help but curse in her heart. The shock was real. Maybe not even the Bells, not Jude's father Devin, not even Abram, knew this hidden identity of Jude. This hidden identity was the ultimate protection for him. Even if Jude fell out with the other Bells or went up against Abram, just being the leader of Hard Corps Uprising would be enough for him to seize control of the Bells. He'd never have to fear anyone. Not even Tilda or Andy would ever cross someone like that. Tilda typed, "So, Jude, you're telling me all this ...

" You should know, in my heart, you're more important than anyone or anything in the world. " " My heart and soul belong to you, so why would I care about anything else? " Even though it was just a text message, Tilda knew exactly how Jude would look at his screen. He must be the same as always. So gentle. So steadfast. " I can feel how much you care about me, Jude. Thank you. " Even though it was just a hidden identity, Tilda knew just how much this secret was worth. On the black market, it could fetch billions. For some people, it would be priceless.

Jude was the leader of Hard Corps Uprising . This was his trump card , the one thing he could never reveal . And yet .44 he handed the secret over to Tilda so easily . There was no greater proof of trust than that . Tonight , Jude was finally going to get a good night's sleep .

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Jessie couldn't hide her delight after being praised . She rested her chin in her hand and eyed Tilda . " So , Tilda , does your painting really make that much money ? " " Jessie , that's not how you talk to Tilda ! " Megan tried to scold her on the surface , but her eyes gave her away . She was dying to know just how much money Tilda , now a world champion and outed as X , was making . If people paid Tilda for paintings , what would the price be ? All those famous painters like Picasso and Van Gogh - any of their works could fetch millions .

A few million for an original painting by Tilda didn't sound expensive at all . Tilda simply replied , " I don't have an income . I'm still living off my savings . " " What ? That can't be ! " Tilda , are you treating us like outsiders and lying to us now ? You're a total celebrity now . Everyone's talking about you on TikTok and Twitter . " You've got fans everywhere - any painting you make could sell for a fortune . Are you just afraid we'll ask to borrow money ? You're so stingy . " Jessie snickered and shot Tilda a look , clearly not believing her . " Jessie !

" Megan was about to blow her top at her clueless daughter . She'd warned her so many times not to upset Tilda , but here Jessie was ruining everything . She'd brought Jessie along , thinking that as a 15 - year - old , she'd have more in common with Tilda and could help break the ice . But now , it felt like she was sabotaging Megan's one shot at a windfall .

and Her Clueless Daughter +8 Pearts With her husband secretly moving money out , having an affair , and even getting his mistress pregnant , Megan knew she had to act quickly or be left penniless after the divorce . The last thing she wanted was to go back to living broke - especially with Jessie dragging her down . When Jessie realized Megan was losing her temper , she remembered her promise to her mom . So she just pouted and kept playing on her phone . " Sorry , this kid just blurts things out ...

Or maybe she's just too dumb to know better ." Megan gave up trying to explain and just wished Jessie would disappear . " Your reaction is totally normal . I'm not surprised . The reason I said that is commissions lately . I haven't had any " Of course , I'm also thinking about my own future . Selling paintings is one option , but if I put out too much work , my popularity will suffer , and the value of my

work will drop . " Tilda's answer was flawless . Megan and Jessie finally had nothing left to say . She must be out of her mind to turn down easy money like that .

With Megan glaring daggers at her , Jessie finally put her phone down , pressed her palms together , and apologized sincerely . " Sorry , Tilda . I shouldn't have said that . I'm still a kid . I know you won't hold it against me , right ? "

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Jessie blurted out , " Wait ... you're not talking about the Jensons ' fake heiress Kyla , are you ? " That whole scandal had blown up all over the internet . Jessie was familiar with every detail about Tilda cutting ties with the Jensens over Kyla . She loved it . This real - life drama in a rich family was way more exciting than any TV show . She thought , According to her , are there secrets behind the whole thing ? " Fake heiress ? No , she's the real deal . The Jensens treat her like family . " I'm out of the picture now , and she's the only one they recognize . She gets all their love .

" She has everything . Her parents and brothers shower her with gifts every season and holiday . All those limited - edition designer bags , clothes , shoes ... she could fill a room the size of a few thousand square feet . " Her allowance never drops below hundreds of thousands a rakes in millions - probably has no idea how much . During the holidays , she saved by now . " She's always had the best - best home , best life , best education , grew up with all the rich girls , lived in luxury , and most importantly , she's loved by her family .

" Compared to me - the real daughter who was lost for 19 years - her life is so much brighter . It's so enviable , doesn't it ? " 1/3 Even back when her own family abroad was rich and her dad still spoiled her , her monthly allowance was capped at tens of thousands of dollars at best . If Jessie bought a designer bag , some dresses , or jewelry , that was all gone .

And as for limited - edition or custom luxury gifts , she'd only ever heard about those . Even for her birthday , the birthday allowance only came to a few hundred thousand . We're both daughters . She was even adopted from an orphanage . How did she get that lucky to end up with a bunch of idiots like the Jensens ? They have no blood ties , but they spoil her rotten ? That is insane luck . Anyone would be jealous . " Yeah , sounds ... pretty enviable , doesn't it ? " Tilda said this while glancing at Megan . She noticed Megan looked completely different than when she first walked in .

Before , Tilda hadn't been totally sure if Megan knew Kyla was her own abandoned daughter . But now ... She was sure of it . Otherwise , Megan wouldn't have reacted so strongly to Kyla's name . The rest of the meal tasted great to Tilda . Megan and Jessie , though , completely lost their appetites . All because Tilda had brought up one person- Kyla . Megan was unsettled , knowing her own daughter was living such a good life . Jessie , on the other hand , just couldn't get over her jealousy .

Kyla , just an adopted daughter , 2/3 Megan tried to compose herself . " Sorry ... Tilda , my daughter just acts like that . Hope you're not offended . " " It's fine . That's just how young people are these days . I get it . " " But Mrs. Walsh , I heard your husband's company hasn't been doing so well lately ? " Megan stiffened and forced a laugh . " Ah ...

Tilda , where'd you hear that ? Of course everything's fine ! " " That's good , then . Just something I heard , that's all . " " Well , thanks for the meal . I had a great time . Goodbye . " Tilda stood up as she spoke . Megan quickly added , " Leaving already , Tilda ? Won't you stay a bit longer ? " " No , I've got some things to take care of . Too bad I didn't get to meet your husband ... Maybe next time . " Is s your husband still on his way ? Tell him not to rush . We ' already done eating ." The mention of her husband made Megan's face cloud over again .

" Sorry , he said he'd be here , but something came up at work . I really apologize ... " It's fine , don't worry about it . Work comes first . " Tilda replied , sounding totally understanding . But her eyes sparkled with amusement . The bait was set . Now she just had to wait for Megan and her precious daughter ... to bite .

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Tilda just had to wait for the moment Megan and Jessie took the bait ... and once they did , she'd reel in the big fish . Oh wait . There is someone else . Someone crucial . After Tilda left , Megan's forced smile finally faded . She pulled out her phone and looked at the messages from her husband , Jesse Walsh . " A student painter ? What help could they possibly be ? Stop wasting my time . Shit ! If you want to see her , you go see her yourself ! " Megan squeezed the phone so hard her palm turned white . " Ah !

" With a furious yell , she hurled the phone at the floor . Smack ! The phone was tough , so only the screen protector shattered with a sharp crack . The rest of it stayed intact . " Jesse Walsh , you heartless man ! " We were married for so many years . Even now , I'm still racking my brain for ways to help you save the company . " And what do I get ? You just brush me off , acting like it doesn't matter and running off to your mistress . " Megan's jaw clenched so tight she almost broke a tooth . Most of the family's money was in Jesse's hands .

Even though Megan had lived the good life all these years , she never stopped stashing away a little for herself as a safety net . But that was barely a drop in the bucket . 1/4 If Jesse really moved their assets behind her back and there was no proof when they divorced , the money Megan could get her hands on would barely last half a year . The thought made Megan pick up her phone and call another number . Once she confirmed the person was home , Megan swayed her hips and strode out the door .

She had no idea that Tilda hadn't really left the area after the meal . Instead , Tilda had started her car and watched as Megan hopped in a cab and headed off somewhere . Tilda followed along at a steady pace . After about half an hour of driving , Megan arrived at an old neighborhood . Tilda stayed in her car , pulled out her phone , and easily hacked into the building's outdated security system . After all , the network there probably hadn't been updated in years , and no one was really watching it . For Tilda , breaking in was effortless .

She watched as Megan headed to Unit 508 and knocked on the door . She said softly , " It's me . Open up . " The door opened . Before Megan could react , a big pair of arms pulled her into an embrace . " Honey , I missed you so much . " " Stop it ! The door isn't even closed yet . What are you doing ? Quit grabbing me , it hurts ! " Megan complained , but she didn't push the man away . She lifted a foot and shut the door behind her . This man was Megan's ex - husband , Kyla's biological father - James Dawson . He'd done time for multiple burglaries , serving 15 years in prison .

2/4 After they finished in bed , James lit a cigarette and lounged beside Megan , pulling her close . " Honey , didn't you say you were going to meet that Tilda girl to see if there was any money to be made ? " Why are you back so soon ? Did you get anything useful ? " Megan lay there , satisfied , idly tracing circles on James's chest . " No ... I've only met her twice . Just getting her to have dinner with me is already a favor . " She's just a college student .

I tried asking about her income , but she dodged the question and made up some excuse . I knew there was definitely more to it . " And don't get me started on that bastard Jesse . Even when I try to help him turn things around , he acts like I'm out to get him ! " He only cares about those women outside and their brats ! " Megan could barely contain her rage . She looked like she wanted to tear Jesse apart . James took a last drag on his cigarette and patted Megan's cheek . " Come on , Honey , now that I'm back , you don't have to put up with that guy anymore ... I'm getting jealous .

"" Don't worry , Honey , I don't care about him at all . I'm just running low on cash . Divorce is just a matter of time . " When the divorce happens , we'll be broke . Haven't those friends you made in prison found any evidence yet ? " " Nothing so far . That foreign guy is more careful than I thought , and all his

women are tucked away in fancy neighborhoods . We can't get to them . " Maybe we should just hire someone to take him out . " If he dies , you're still his legal wife , so you'd inherit everything . " James's eyes flashed dangerously , and he made a throat - slitting gesture .

" With all the surveillance these days , who's stupid enough to actually do that ? " Even if someone did , they'd get caught and rat us out . The risk is way too high . Murder's a death sentence , you know ."

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He Isn't an Idiot +8 Pearls " Jesse isn't an idiot . I know he set up a will ages ago . If anything happens to him , people are definitely going to suspect me ... " " So this won't work , and that won't work either . Damn it , why does everything have to be so complicated ? I thought once I finally got out of prison , I'd be able to enjoy life ! " Don't forget , if I hadn't stolen all that money and helped you clean up your act , you never would have landed a rich guy like Jesse ! " James shoved Megan off his lap in frustration and walked over to the window to sulk .

Megan let out a quiet sigh , climbed out of bed , and hugged James from behind , speaking carefully . " Honey , I know you've done a lot for me , but we can't rush things . The more impatient we are , the more likely we are to screw up and then we'll lose everything . " ... " And there's Kyla ... our first daughter . It seems like she's doing really well with the Jensens . " Just mentioning Kyla seemed to calm James down . He couldn't help but grin . He turned , pulling Megan into his arms , his spirits suddenly high .

" Honey , I've always told you , if things really get bad , we can go to Kyla for help . " The Jensens are the wealthiest family in Slosa , and they treat Kyla like gold . She's got to have a ton of money ! " ... Megan hesitated . " But Honey , we left Kyla at the orphanage . We never did right by her as parents . If we only show up when we're broke , I'm afraid she'll hate us and refuse to see us ... 11 " Honey , what are you talking about ? Kyla's our flesh and blood . Without us , she wouldn't even be alive in this world . " We're her biological parents , and nothing can change that .

Besides , we had no choice but to leave Kyla back then . Would you rather have dragged her around and let her suffer with us ? " " Let's just hope we don't get to that point . If there's any other way , we shouldn't do it . " Megan hugged James even tighter , not because she really loved him . After all ... James was still the father of her two children . He was also the only person she could count on right now . 1/3 Maybe it was just shared interests and a common goal , but neither of them could afford to betray the other . And ...

Megan was still a woman with desires . At her age , she still craved intimacy . Jesse never cared about her anymore . His heart was completely with his mistress . So Megan could only seek emotional warmth from James . Tilda had pretty much figured out the way Megan and James operated together . She picked up her phone and called Andy . " Sorry to bother you , Andy . I wanted to check ... how are things going with arranging the quick transfer of Jessie's assets and those overseas visas for the people he wants to take ? " " Don't worry , Tilda .

Since you asked , I've already sent lawyers to start the process . I'm keeping an eye on it myself , so we'll have an answer soon . " " Good . I need to push Megan and the others into a corner , so they'll head to Slosa to find Kyla . That way , my plan can move even faster . " After hanging up , someone started spamming Tilda in the Comet Squad group chat . Tilda replied , " I'm here . What's going on ? Why the sudden panic ? " Jarrett answered , " Tilda , remember when you asked us to keep an eye on that overseas base and see if your person showed up ? There's news !

The person you mentioned is out ! " Tilda said excitedly , " Screenshot it and send it to me ! " Jarrett and the others quickly uploaded images captured from the security cameras . It was definitely Liam ! He even had three assistants carrying bags behind him ! He'd finally overcome that strange illness and left the base ! Tilda was so thrilled she immediately shared the news with Dane and Mystro . Dane didn't reply , probably because he was busy in the lab . 2/3 +8 Pearls But Mystro answered right away . " I can't believe you heard about this so quickly , Tilda .

I was just about to tell you . " Liam already called to let me know he's okay . I told him about you and Dane . " He was surprised and said he wants to fly out and meet you both right away ! " I've cleared my schedule and plan to fly out with Liam to meet you all . " " Okay , I'll head to Hetsa next . Let's all meet up there ! " Still buzzing with excitement , Tilda announced a year - end bonus for every Comet Squad member in the group chat . Jarrett said excitedly , " Woohoo ! Long live Tilda ! " Theo cheered , " Tonight's dinner is covered . Thanks , Tilda !

" Zach replied , " Much appreciated ! " Astrid said , " Go , Tilda ! Go see the person you've been waiting for . " As Tilda's cousin , Astrid could understand Tilda's joy better than anyone .

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Do You Trust Us ? +8 Pearls Ever since she learned that Tilda had cut ties with the Jensens , and all the awful things the Jensens had done to her- Astrid had felt both heartache and guilt for her idol and cousin . Now , seeing Tilda find a new family , one that truly loved and cherished her , no one was happier than Astrid . Tilda said , " Thank you all . I'm heading out now . " She also let Una , Andy , and Jude know . They were genuinely happy for Tilda , too . " Go for it , Tilda ! Hurry over - don't waste a second . Go meet the most precious person in your life ! " Hetsa , here I come !

When Tilda arrived at Hetsa Airport , it was still 4 a.m. Mystro and Liam had coordinated to fly in on the earliest flights they could get . Because of the long distance , they wouldn't arrive until at least noon . Tilda put on her wireless headphones and played some music . She found a comfortable spot to sit and settled in to wait . She had already left messages for Manfred and the others , waiting for them to reach out first . Speak of the devil . Manfred sent a video call request right then . " Queen , is something wrong ? " " No , Mr. Parker , actually it's ...

" Tilda shared the news that Liam and the rest were on their way to Hetsa . Once Manfred realized Dane's juniors were coming , he looked troubled . Tilda picked up on it right away . " Mr. Parker , did something happen with Dane ? " 1/3 " No , not exactly ... Queen , Professor Kerrigan is currently leading an elite team and working in seclusion on the last big challenge . " Honestly ... it might be a while before you'll get to see him . " " Why ? Isn't the lithography machine project almost finished ? " Manfred let out a long sigh .

" The closer we get to the end , the more careful we have to be . To achieve the precision needed for the lithography machine , we must create a 4nm chip . That is the hardest part . " Right now , our country can only manufacture 28nm chips . If Professor Kerrigan succeeds , it'll break the monopoly . This milestone will go down in history . " But after all these years , countless top scientists in Cetherland have spent their whole lives trying and still failed .

" Even for a once - in - a - century genius like Professor Kerrigan , starting from scratch and developing a 4nm lithography machine in a short time is just impossible . " Our country is getting stronger , but compared to the truly developed nations , there's still a gap of decades . That can't be closed overnight or with empty slogans . " We have to acknowledge this gap and learn from others . That's the best strategy .

" To be honest , even if the lithography machine project was already in its final stages , Manfred still wasn't sure if Dane could actually break the monopoly and build a 4nm chip required for the lithography machine . Trying to close a decades - long gap between Cetherland and other countries with just one person , one team , was like chasing a fairy tale . However , Dane was such a rare genius . Because of that , Manfred , Lab Seven , and the entire nation were willing to put their hopes in him and give their full support . But if Dane failed , no one would blame him .

This was an almost impossible task from the start . But with Dane there , even the impossible seemed just a little more within reach . Tilda fell silent . Manfred quickly tried to comfort her . " It's a shame that you probably can't see him ... but 2/3 soter +8 Pearis Queen , try to understand Professor Kerrigan and the country's situation . Since you all made it to Hetsa , let me show you around the city . " " Mr. Parker , I actually have an idea I wanted to discuss . Would you be willing to hear me out ? " " Go ahead . " After Tilda finished explaining her thoughts , Manfred looked stunned .

His breathing suddenly raced . " Wait ... Queen , are you serious ? " " Of course I'm serious . I'll explain everything clearly to my two seniors . " We're all from Cetherland . Even if we're separated by distance , that sense of loyalty will never fade . " I don't know how much we can actually do , but as long as it's for Dane and for Cetherland's future , we won't hesitate ! " The only question is whether you trust us , Mr. Parker , and if you're willing to give us the chance . " Tilda's words were so firm and passionate that Manfred was swept up by her determination .

" If I said I fully trusted you from the start , Queen , that would have been a lie . " We've had our issues before , but now I can honestly say I trust you one hundred percent ! " And of course , I trust Professor Kerrigan's juniors , too . " Since this is an almost impossible challenge , all we can do is give it everything we've got , so we have no regrets . "

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Meeting Liam for the First Time +8 Pearls " I don't want doubts or any last - minute hesitation to hold Professor Kerrigan or our country back at the last step ! " Manfred knew this was a risky gamble . He trusted Tilda . But when it came to Mystro and Liam , he didn't know them well enough . To say he trusted them would be a stretch . If either of them ever betrayed the team Manfred knew he could never handle the consequences .

But if they just kept stalling like this , even with Dane leading the best elite team , there was no way they could break through and create the 4nm chip needed for the lithography machine . The only thing Manfred was sure of was that Dane's mentor , Harvey , had only taken in students with truly insane intelligence and talent . Tilda's capabilities , which didn't quite match her current age , were proof enough . If the other three were just as talented as Dane , maybe they really could break the monopoly . Maybe they could build Cetherland's own lithography machine .

Even just a one or two percent better chance was worth it . That was enough for Manfred to take the risk . " Thank you , Mr. Parker . Then I'll leave the job of persuading your superiors to you . " " I'll do my very best , Queen . You just focus on what you do best and help Professor Kerrigan ! " " I'll do everything I can to help Dane ! " After the call ended , Tilda took a deep breath . To create a 4nm chip ... She knew

better than anyone how important this was for Cetherland to break through the barriers and defeat all those countries jealously guarding their monopoly .

1/4 Soon , noon arrived . Tilda's phone buzzed with a message . It was from Mystro . " Tilda , I've arrived . " " Over here , Mystro . " Tilda quickly shared her location with him . Soon , Mystro showed up with a backpack , wearing a mask . The moment he spotted Tilda , he gave her a huge hug . " Tilda , it's been so long ! " Tilda stuck out her tongue playfully . " Mystro , didn't we just see each other a few days ago , on New Year's ? You're exaggerating . " " Tilda , even one day apart feels like years . It's been over 20 days - of course I missed you !

" Mystro reached out and patted Tilda's head , his voice gentle . Ever since he lost his parents , Mystro couldn't remember the last time he'd felt this way . Now , he knew he still had his seniors and Tilda , living well on the other side of the world . That gave him hope and something to care about . He didn't feel alone anymore . This warm feeling , this longing , it's like color finally returned to my world . Life isn't just gray anymore . Now it's bursting with color . I'm so grateful for it . " Mystro , you're so sweet . Did you eat honey today ? " Tilda giggled in his arms .

" By the way , Mystro , since you rushed over , what about your job ... " 2/4 " It doesn't matter . I've already made enough money to last for a few lifetimes . Work is just something to pass the time . Meeting up with you all is way more important . " Mystro already knew what mattered most in his heart . " I love how straightforward you are , Mystro . " " Now , we just have to wait for Liam to arrive . " " His flight left later than mine . It'll probably be another hour .

" With Mystro there , the hour passed quickly as they chatted and laughed . People couldn't help but stop and stare , even though both of them wore masks , their identities unknown . The warm , sibling - like atmosphere between them would touch anyone's heart . Finally , Mystro's phone buzzed with a message from Liam . " Tilda , Liam just landed . Let's go meet him . " " Okay ! " Tilda's heart sped up . Liam ... This would be her first time seeing Liam in person . To her , Liam was like a real - life Dr. Black Jack - brilliant and mysterious . Moments later , Liam came into view .

Liam wore a black trench coat over a wool sweater and a pair of Dr. Comfort loafers . His hair was neatly cropped , and his dark eyes were cool and precise . There was a depth to his gaze , someone who had seen through everything . like His thin lips and sharp nose gave him the look of a asoned soldier . If not for that quiet , distant aura - so common among doctors who've faced countless life - and- death situations - no one would have guessed Liam was a doctor . This was the person Tilda had dreamed of meeting for so long . She recognized him instantly .

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Liam's Story Mystro seemed to notice Tilda's nerves and gave her a reassuring smile . " Don't worry , Liam might look hard to approach , but he's actually incredibly gentle with the people he cares about . " " Over here ! Liam ! " " Mystro ... Tilda ! " Liam's eyes shifted from Mystro to Tilda . A moment later , a small smile tugged at his lips . Maybe because he almost never smiled , it looked a bit stiff . But Tilda could sense the warmth beneath those usually unreadable eyes . Liam's voice was even deeper and richer than she expected .

Honestly , he could have started a career as a voice actor right then and there . If he played the lead in one of those dramatic romance stories , fans would have gone wild just listening to him . Honestly , this is the best voice I've ever heard . In that instant , Tilda felt even closer to Liam , her admiration for him growing . " So this is Tilda ? Tilda ... " Liam stopped in front of her , calling her name with a natural intimacy that instantly eased the awkwardness of a first meeting . " I've heard so much about you from Mystro .

Ever since I found out about your existence , I've wanted to meet you more than anyone . " " Me too , Liam . " Tilda suddenly felt a sting behind her eyes . She once thought that , after cutting ties with the Jensens , she'd never experience true family love again . But now , she'd found new bonds that felt just as real as any blood relationship . She couldn't help but step forward and hug Liam . 1/2 A part of him that had been frozen for years slowly thawed , and the girl before him gradually found her way into that space . " It's okay , I'm here , Tilda . Don't be afraid . If anyone ever bullies you , just tell me and I'll settle the score . " Even if it's Mystro or Dane , I'll still take your side and teach them a lesson ! " Mystro raised both hands in mock surrender . " Spare me ! I wouldn't dare make Tilda mad . If anything , I'd like to get on her good side ! " " It's nothing .

I was just so happy to finally meet Liam , that's all . " " You two must be starving after those flights . Come on , I'll show you some great food in Hetsa . " " Lead the way , Tilda . We'll go wherever you want . " Soon , Tilda took Liam and Mystro to one of Hetsa's best Cajun boil shops and reserved a private room . " Nothing hits the spot better than cajun boil on a cold day . I asked them to keep it mild , just in case you're not used to the spice . " Liam wiped his hands with a napkin , a faint smile playing on his lips . " I'm not picky . " Mystro chimed in , " Me neither .

If Tilda recommends it , it has to be good . " The three of them dug in and caught up over lunch . After sharing her own story , Tilda had even more questions for Liam . Liam caught the look on her face and answered before she could ask . " Mr. Harvey only taught me for about a year . When I was nine , I lost

my family in an air raid and was raised by a battlefield doctor . That's how I first learned medicine . The doctor eventually became my foster father . " Back then , there was constant fighting along the Yvorian border . We lived on edge every day .

Once , when we were treating wounded soldiers , a shell hit us . " My foster father died instantly . I was badly hurt too , and I almost didn't make it . That's when Mr. Harvey saved me . " A few months later , after I'd recovered , Mr. Harvey took me in as his student . He taught me medicine for a year . Then , he suddenly told me he had nothing left to teach me and just 213 " Back then , I was like you , Tilda . I thought Mr. Harvey must have had his reasons . I searched everywhere for his traces and found nothing , until I met Mystro .

That's when I learned just how mysterious and extraordinary Mr. Harvey really is . " He summed it up briefly , but nothing was left out . Sensing the heavy mood , Mystro jumped in . " Don't worry , Uncle Harvey is probably living his best life somewhere out there . Maybe he's already teaching new students , just like how he taught you guys . " " Yeah , with Mr. Harvey's skills , nobody could get the better of him . We know that better than anyone . " " Still ... if I had the chance , I'd want to see him again . Just to know he's okay - that would be enough .

" Liam spoke what everyone was feeling . Tilda pressed her lips together , took a sip of wine , and looked at her two seniors with a determined light in her eyes . " Mystro , Liam , I need your help with something . I hope you'll hear me out before you decide . " Mystro flicked Tilda's forehead and frowned . " Why are you being so formal ? If you need anything , Tilda , just ask . We'll help , no matter what . "

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Thanks for Your Help Liam chimed in , " Mystro's right , Tilda . I could tell you were hiding something on the way over . If there's anything we can do to help , just say the word . " " Is this about Dane's illness ? " " That's part of it , Mystro . Liam , there's also something else " Tilda told them about the bottleneck Dane was facing with the 4nm chip project . " I've already decided to join Dane's team and help him get past this last hurdle ! " Mystro , Liam , if you think you have what it takes , I hope you'll fight alongside me and Dane ! " And about Dane's illness .

Liam , I really hope you can cure him , so that he could speak again ! " " I've heard a bit about Dane's condition . Tilda , you don't even have to ask . I'll do everything I can to help him speak again . " " This is probably what Mr. Harvey wanted , too . The reason I started treating strange illnesses was because of him . He wanted me to hone my medical skills and not get stuck in one field . " Now that I know about Dane , I have a feeling that curing him is the test Mr. Harvey meant for me all along ! " As Liam finished , things finally clicked for Tilda and Mystro .

It turned out there was a deeper meaning to why Harvey took Liam in as a student . He had recognized his medical talent from the start . No wonder Liam spent so much time curing rare and mysterious illnesses no one else could handle . Turned out he was acting on Harvey's instructions . " Alright , we'll leave Dane's condition to you , Liam . " As for the lithography machine ... " Tilda , before I give you an answer , I have to make one thing clear , everyone knows how tough this project is . " It's the one thing that lets developed countries keep their edge .

Even with Cetherland's brightest minds and all our resources , it's not something that can be done overnight . " That said ... we'll still give it our all . For Dane , and for our homeland . " 1/3 Even if they lost everything , even if they weren't living in Cetherland anymore , their loyalty never faded . " Right , Mystro , Liam , as long as we give it everything we've got and have no regrets , that's enough . " The rest ... " Cheers ! " is up to fate !

" With a bright smile , Tilda raised her beer . Mystro and Liam exchanged a look . Then , they lifted their bottles too . " Cheers ! " The next day , Manfred called . " Queen , it's done . After some discussion , the higher - ups agreed . " I've already notified Professor Kerrigan and his team . He said he's thrilled to have you all join . " " So soon ? " Tilda raised her brows in surprise . Even if Manfred trusted them and gave them special privileges , it was still hard to believe the higher - ups agreed so quickly . After all , they had all kinds of concerns , and they barely knew Tilda .

" It's all thanks to you for passing the National Cyber Security Center's test and making Comet Squad officially part of the state system . " Word got around . Last night , when I asked the higher - ups , both Mr. Benedict and Mr. Wesley from the National Cyber Security Center spoke up for you . " That's how it happened so quickly . " " I need to find a chance to thank them properly . } bring us in . " " I'll come pick you up myself ! " After hanging up , Tilda quickly explained everything to Mystro and Liam . Then , the three of them got in the car and headed for Lab Seven's base .

Mystro drove , Liam took the passenger seat , and Tilda sat in the back . She took out her phone and started a video call with Benedict . It connected right away . When Benedict's face appeared , Tilda thanked him . " Mr. Benedict , thank you and Mr. Wesley so much for your help ." She knew it took a lot of courage to vouch for them .. It was one thing to do it for her , but now there were two others , Mystro and Liam , who were basically strangers . Until the 4nm chip lithography project succeeded , the whole thing was top secret in Cetherland .

If anything leaked , those who vouched for them would take the blame first . She'd only met Benedict a couple of times , and they were barely acquaintances . Yet , they'd go out of their way to help her . Tilda

was genuinely grateful . " Haha , Tilda , we're colleagues , aren't we ? You don't have to be so formal with me . "

Chapter 500

500 Joining Dane's Team +8 Pearls "But you have to realize , what you're about to do is truly unprecedented in Cetherland's history -a mission that's considered impossible ." Benedict's whole demeanor shifted . He dropped the playful attitude and was all business now . " I know , Mr. Benedict . I'll do everything I can to help Dane ." Tilda's reply was just as earnest . " Good . I hope that next time I call , I'll get to hear good news from you all . " I've seen what you're capable of . The younger generation really does outshine the old . The future is yours .

" If helping you even gives Cetherland the slightest chance to pull off this so - called impossible task , I'll gladly pay any price ! " Back in the day , Benedict and his brother Wesley had watched as foreign hackers invaded Cetherland's national network , acting all smug and gloating . Fueled by their patriotic spirit , they rallied Cetherland's best hackers and launched a counterattack against anyone daring to mess with their country's cyberspace . With their superb wisdom and skills , they pulled off a comeback so spectacular that the world finally took notice .

After that , no one dared underestimate Cetherland's cyber talent again . After all these years and everything they'd been through , they'd grown wiser , less impulsive . But that deep - rooted love for their country had never faded . If anything , it had grown even stronger and sharper with time . Maybe just this once , they could afford to be a little reckless - for the sake of the girl they believed in . They decided to trust her . " We will , I promise !

" When Tilda and the others arrived at Lab Seven's base , they made it through several rounds of security scans and checks before meeting Manfred , They walked through long corridors , took the elevator , and Manfred used his ID to send them to the lowest level . The elevator dropped quickly . Ding- The doors slid open . Manfred led them through a sanitizing room and into the lounge . Dane was already waiting for them . " Dane !

" Tilda's face lit up as she rushed over to Dane . He caught her and gently stroked her head . " Dane , you've lost weight . Look at those dark circles and that beard ... " I know research matters , but you still need to take care of yourself ." Just hugging Dane , Tilda could feel his waist was even thinner than before . He'd always been slim , and now he was so thin that Tilda's heart ached . Dane only stroked her

hair , his eyes gentle as he told her silently , I'm fine . Don't Once Tilda let go , Mystro and Liam stepped forward . " Dane , this is Liam . " Dane sized up Liam .

Liam did the same . worry , Tilda . Then , they both reached out at the same time , as if they were on the same wavelength . They even gave each other a quick hug . Dane grabbed a notepad and wrote in strong , clear letters , " Great to meet you , Liam . " Liam smiled . " Same here , Dane . " Finished " Alright , we'll have plenty of time to catch up . Dane , I'm sure Mr. Parker has already told you why we're here . " Liam will be working with you on the lithography machine and collecting samples to assist in treating your condition .

" I know you'd never slow down your research for anything , but now that we're here , we'll do everything we can to help ! " Tilda gave a thumbs - up . Seeing his two long - lost juniors and Tilda , Dane's eyes softened . " Thank you . " " No problem . " At that moment , Manfred clapped his hands , drawing everyone's attention . " Sorry to interrupt your happy reunion , but I need to go over a few important points about the lithography machine project ... " Manfred laid out everything they had to keep in mind for the project . After that , it was all up to Dane .

In the lab , Dane's team was busy working through the day's experiments . The group included leading scientists specializing in mechanical engineering , electronics , and chemistry . Just then , a middle - aged man suddenly spoke up , " Did you hear about Professor Kerrigan stepping out to welcome three new team members ? " " Yeah , I heard one of them is the Queen - she's a top dark web hacker . She played a huge role in the programming the early stages of the lithography machine project .

" " I also heard she led her own squad and got official recognition from the National Cyber Security Center . They even made it into the state's system on their own . " " Even Mr. Parker and Professor Kerrigan can't stop praising her . She's also Professor Kerrigan's junior , so her skills must be the real deal . "