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In Evan's opinion, there was no need for Chris to do anything because things were still salvageable for him to make use of!

Chris earned their trust by agreeing to put on the show for Nina. At the same time, he could also use it to turn Nina against her family by telling her that he was forced by Nicole and Sheila to pretend that he was taken. With that, Nina would drift further and further away from her family and get closer to him in the end.

Could Evan's guess be correct?

Meanwhile, Nina was staring unblinkingly at the messages she had just received from Chris. From the tone of his texts, she could sense his resignation. He asked for her forgiveness for what took place at the cafe earlier and pointed out the fact that he was forced to be there. He also mentioned that he was indeed not good enough for her, and he hoped that she could move on from him and find a better man in the future.

Nina did not understand what he meant by saying that he was "forced" to be at the cafe. She could not figure out why he said he was "indeed" not good enough for her.

There must be some underlying reason behind how he phrased that text, and Nina couldn't wait to get to the bottom of it.

Immediately, she sent him a reply: What do you mean by saying that you were forced to be there? I hope you can clarify it.

After a while, she received a reply from him: Please stop asking me questions. All you have to know is that your family is willing to do everything they can for your good. Please do listen to their advice in the future!

My family?

What has this got anything to do with my family?

Frowning, Nina texted him again: I don't understand what you mean! Did anyone in my family talk to you before?

Chris responded: No, please don't get me wrong. They are a bunch of nice people. It's just that the girl they introduced to me wasn't exactly my type. However, I believe both of us will get to meet our right partners in the future.

The girl they introduced to him?

Did my family set Chris up with that beautiful girl at the cafe?

Nina fell silent as she brooded over her chance encounter with Chris and his girlfriend at the cafe, and she started doubting whether she really bumped into them by chance. The more she pondered over the details, the more she was convinced that it was actually staged!

She asked Chris through a text: Did my family find that girlfriend for you? Was Daddy, Mommy, or Uncle Davin and Aunt Sheila the ones who did that?

I only ran into Chris and his girlfriend because Uncle Davin and Aunt Sheila took me to the cafe. Did Daddy and Mommy know about their plan? Or...

At that moment, Nina had a pressing urge to find out the culprit who came up with such an unscrupulous plan to make her give up on Chris.

Chris: I can't tell you anything about that. In short, you just have to know that your family are the people who love you the most in the world! You have to listen to their advice!

After scrutinizing his messages, Nina noticed that her family had been mentioned quite frequently. Was the encounter with Chris and that girl staged by them?

Did my family work together just to trick me?

Why? Why would they do such a thing to me? I don't understand!

Nina held her phone in a tight grasp. Her mind was jammed with doubts and suspicions. How could Daddy and Mommy, to whom I deeply respect, plot against me just because they don't like the guy I'm crushing on? Do they know how devastated I am after seeing Chris with his girlfriend?

Or, are they too self-centered to care about my feelings?

Feeling indignant, she put on a pair of slippers and marched out of her room to the master bedroom. Just as she was about to knock on the door, she heard snatches of an ongoing conversation coming from inside.

"Other than keeping an eye on Nina, we have to get someone to keep tabs on Chris too. Once we notice any sign of him trying to get in touch with Nina, we will teach him a lesson so that he knows she should back off! He will stand no chance of getting near to Nina again!" Davin snarled.

"I'll get John to do it," Evan said.

"I'll keep an eye on Nina too. No matter what Chris might be up to, I won't let him achieve what he wants!" Nicole said with determination in her voice. She would not allow anyone to exploit her beloved daughter and hurt her!

Nina was rendered speechless.

It was only after listening to the conversation between the trio did she believe the content of Chris' messages.

They really conspired with each other against me!

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They said they were going to keep an eye on Chris to stop him from getting in touch with me! It's only because they thought he wasn't good enough for me...

They're so despicable!

At that moment, Nina felt a deep sense of betrayal realizing that her family was not on her side. They had done so many things to sabotage her relationship with Chris, and Nina was adamant that she would not have their blessing if she ended up being with Chris. From that moment on, it dawned upon her that she could only rely on herself if she wanted to fight for her happiness...

It seems like I have to refrain from sharing my thoughts with Mommy and Maya in the future...

Going back to her bedroom, Nina hesitated for a moment before sending a message to Chris: What kind of girl do you fancy?

Chris replied: Why're you asking me this all of a sudden?

Taking a deep breath, Nina typed her question and sent it back to him: I want to know if you will be interested in a girl like me.

He responded: I don't deserve a girl like you!

Nina: That's not the answer I want to hear. Just tell me whether you have feelings for me. I might sound unladylike by saying this, but I really fancy you a lot!

Chris responded: I'm not going to give you an answer as I don't want you to harbor any expectation. In fact, we might never see each other again because I'm going back to K Nation soon.

He's going back to K Nation?

Nina quickly typed him a reply: What's the rush? Did my family force you to go back? If that's the case, let me apologize to you on their behalf! But can you take me to K Nation alongside you? A crafty smile emerged on Chris' face when he saw the last sentence of Nina's message.

That was exactly what he had been waiting to hear from her.

Chris: Are you really willing to go with me? You'd better think twice because your parents aren't going to allow us to be together.

Nina: This is my life. So, I'm the only one who can make decisions for myself.

Chris: Nina, I really love how bold and decisive you are when it comes to your relationship!

Overjoyed to receive the compliment from Chris, Nina's face broke into a faint smile.

Nina: When will you be leaving? I'll meet you at your place.

Chris: That will be too risky. I'll give you some time to think about your decision. If you're sure this is what you want, please do it like this... Chris went on to share the plan he had concocted long before his conversation with Nina and ended his message with a reminder for her: Nina, you'd better take some time to think about it because the decision is going to be life-changing for you. I won't harbor any hard feelings even if you decide not to go with me in the end. You'll always be in my mind and I'll wish you happiness.

Nina: I'll go with you! Please believe me that I'll do everything according to your plan.

Chris: Have a good rest then, my princess. Love ya!

Nina's judgment was completely clouded at the moment by the excitement of having her relationship with Chris blossomed into love. She could not see the ulterior motive Chris might be harboring toward her at all. Her heart had been melted by Chris' message and a wide grin started spreading across her face.

Nothing in the world could be more wonderful than having one's feelings reciprocated.

She couldn't resist but pick up a pen to write down Chris' name on a blank paper. Each stroke was made with meticulous care as though she was doing something sacred.

Beneath his name, she wrote down her wish for their relationship: May nothing but death do us apart!

Nina was smiling throughout that night as she dreamed of riding a horse together with Chris. They trotted along a vast steppe, enjoying the gentle breeze that caressed their face. Their hearty laughter could be heard now and then as Chris shouted his love confession for her...

The sun was already shining bright by the time she woke up the next day. Still savoring the jolly moment she shared with Chris in the dream the previous night, Nina thought about the series of messages she received from Chris. Could the messages be part of the dream too?

Immediately, she sat bolt upright and swept her phone up from the bedside table. She felt relieved in an instant after making sure all the messages were still stored in her phone.

Reading the plan prepared by Chris on her phone, she was overwhelmed by genuine delight. She only needed to carry out his instruction because he had thought it all out for her.

"Chris, please wait for me. I'll settle them pronto."

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Nina got out of bed and washed up. Before she left her room, she paused in her tracks in front of the mirror to make sure her smile was in place. That was the first step as stated in Chris' plan – she had to treat her family with a pleasant attitude so that they would let down their guard.

The first person she bumped into was Maya, who looked bleary-eyed and whose hair was disheveled.

"Morning, Maya."

Maya's pace immediately came to a halt as she regarded Nina with surprise. What's going on? Did Nina just take the initiative to greet me?

Didn't she say that she wanted to cut ties with me and would never speak to me ever again not too long ago? What brought about the drastic change in her attitude?

"Nina, a-are you talking to me? You aren't going to cut ties with me?" Maya asked, her clear eyes sparkled with kindness and joy.

Nina looked slightly dumbfounded by her question. Actually, I'm still going to cut my ties with you, Little Witch. But then again, you aren't the only one who will receive the treatment. I will do the same to everyone who tries to sabotage my relationship with Chris, including Daddy, Mommy, Uncle Davin, and Aunt Sheila! Well, it's better to put it this way – I'm not gonna let anyone have any say in my love life. No one will have the chance to sabotage my relationship with Chris ever again!

"Maya, there's no way I will cut my ties with you. In fact, I've figured it all out – I still have an exciting life ahead of me, and there are better guys who abound in the future. Why should I put all my eggs in one basket at such an early stage of my life?"

"Nina, I'm so glad that you've come around! You're right to think of it that way! From my perspective, Chris Sanders is clearly not the right guy for you. He's so much older than you, and I have a feeling that he's a scheming guy! If you go out with him, there's a high chance that he might take you in!"

Upon hearing Maya's remark, a trace of despise flickered in Nina's eyes. How dare you describe Chris as a scheming man! You're the scheming one here! You're the one I should be careful of, you blabbermouth!

"Yes, you're right. Look at how unkempt you are now! You really should go wash up and comb your hair."

"Okay, I'll do that. After that, I'm going to prepare a super delicious breakfast for you! You'll surely be hooked after taking the first bite of it. I heard that brokenhearted people would feel better after having some desserts..."

Maya froze all of a sudden when she reached that part. Then, she reached out to smack her mouth to punish herself for blurting out the wrong stuff.

"Nina, I'm sorry! Words just tumbled out of my mouth just now that I had no time to process it at all! You aren't brokenhearted at all. Instead, you're just about to embrace an even brighter future! To celebrate the positive change in your life, I'm going to make you a mousse cake!"

Celebrate my arse!

Not only am I not brokenhearted, but I'm also about to begin a relationship with my crush soon! I'm not sure what sort of future I will have in the future, but I'm complacent as long as I get to spend my time with the person I love.

"Sounds exciting. I'll be waiting for you in the living room then."

"Sure! I'll go and wash up now."

Nina rolled her eyes at the back of Maya before she headed downstairs.

As soon as Evan and Nicole woke up in the morning, they were greeted by a spread of delectable and nutritious food on the dining table prepared by Maya.

Maya, who was hustling in the kitchen, shouted at them all of a sudden, "Daddy, Mommy, I'm in the middle of making a super delicious cake. Please be patient and wait for me."

"A super delicious cake? Maya, why are you suddenly in the mood to make a cake early in the morning?"

Maya cast a glance in the direction of the living room and pointed at Nina, who was sitting on the arc-shaped sofa with her eyes staring ahead blankly. In a lower volume, Maya said to her parents, "Daddy, Mommy, Nina had figured it all out. She told me she would no longer be interested in Chris. So, I'm making this cake to celebrate the occasion."

Nicole and Evan exchanged a suspicious glance. Knowing how stubborn Nina was, they couldn't help but wonder how Nina managed to come to her senses in such a short period of time.

It sounded more like something that would happen to Maya rather than Nina. Thus, both of them thought there was something fishy.

Evan gave Nicole a knowing look. Following his cue, Nicole made her way to the living room.

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"Nina!"

Nina, whose mind had been wandering, was jolted back to senses by Nicole's voice. Hastily, she leaped up to her feet and responded to Nicole, "Mommy."

"Nina, it pains me to see how much weight you've lost. Please do eat more later, alright?"

Nina nodded. "Thanks for caring about me so much, Mommy." Then, she took the initiative to apologize to Nicole, "Mommy, the way I dealt with Chris' matter before this was clearly not right. But now, I've figured it all out and I've realized my mistake. From now on, I'll do as Daddy said by never getting in touch with him again."

Sizing Nina up, Nicole asked her gently, "Nina, may I know what has enlightened you to come around all of a sudden?"

Nina tugged the hem of her shirt subconsciously before putting a faint smile on her face. "I think what Daddy and you said are right – I should prioritize my studies over everything else at my age."

Having noticed her body language, Nicole doubted what she said, but she did not let her suspicion show. "Oh, really? I can see you're growing into a big girl now that you can finally accept the advice from us. Nina, please bear in mind that you will always be our sweetheart, and we'll love you dearly at all times!"

Nina was touched by Nicole's words, although her heart did not flutter and race like the way it did when she had read Chris' message.

As much as she was aware of her parent's love for her, she would still prefer to have sole control in her love life. The chance to meet the love of one's life was scarce. According to Sheila, if one happened to miss it, there would be no second chance at it. That was the reason why Sheila fought so hard to be with Davin, who was the love of her life. Everyone had to make an effort to fight for their happiness, or life would not be worth living at all.

Nina couldn't agree more with Sheila's principle. In the end, Sheila's effort did come to fruition as she managed to have a blissful life with Davin now. Inspired by her success, Nina was determined to emulate her and to make sure she would have no regrets in life.

"Mommy, I'll keep that in mind. Why don't we head to the dining hall now? My stomach is rumbling," Nina said.

"Sure."

By the time Nicole and Nina stepped into the dining hall, Maya's cake was ready as well. "Everyone, please have a taste of my cake! I didn't put too much honey in it, so it won't be too sweet to be enjoyed in the morning!"

"The cake is gorgeous. The stripes of honey on top of it really look like rays of morning sunlight! Maya, Mommy is very happy to see how good you're at baking now. I believe both Nina and you will have a very bright future ahead."

Feeling elated, Maya responded with a smile, "I think so too, Mommy. I believe Nina and I are on the right track to becoming better and better!"

With that, she spun around and faced Evan. "Daddy, could you please organize a Gourmet Conference for me? Instead of putting my desserts on exhibition, I'm going to showcase my newest food plaza system!"

"What kind of system is that?" Evan stared at Maya with a look of astonishment.

Maya took some time to contemplate her answer before answering Evan, "Daddy, I'm afraid I have to keep the details confidential. All I can say is that I'm sure it will be a hit! Not only can this system make it easier for people to discover delicious food, but it can also ensure a satisfactory user experience!"

"Wow, you certainly sound very confident about that system of yours!"

"Yes, Daddy. Are you interested in finding out more about how the system works? Do you feel like learning the details right here, right now?"

Intrigued by Maya's description, Nicole said, "Maya, I think you'd better give us a rough idea of your system first so that we can tell you whether it's viable or not before you go on to embarrass yourself."

"Mommy, why can't you have some confidence in me? Don't worry! I'm not going to screw up this time."

All of a sudden, Nina chimed in, "Maya, I believe in you! Daddy, please do organize the conference for Maya."

It will be easier for my plan to work if Daddy and Mommy focus all their attention on preparing Maya's Gourmet Conference!

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Maya was so pleased to see Nina helping her that her eyes gleamed with joy. "Nina, thanks for helping me. I'll treat you to the most delicious food you've ever tasted in your life during the conference!"

"Sure!"

Nina nodded at Maya distractedly, thinking that she might already be living in K Nation by the time Maya's Gourmet Conference was held. I will choose Chris over delicious food any day!

"Daddy, please say yes since even Nina is on my side now." Maya faced her adorable and chubby face to Evan and pleaded coquettishly, "Daddy, as the best Daddy in the whole world, I know you will help me, won't you?"

At last, Evan succumbed to her tactic and nodded. "Fine, I'll help you. Just give me some time to arrange the schedule, and I'll tell you once I fix the time. Meanwhile, you can make use of the time to prepare for the event. I'd not like to see any glitches and hiccups during the event."

"Daddy, please don't worry about that. I promise you that the event will be error-free."

After saying that, Maya served Evan a piece of cake with reverence. "Daddy, please give the cake a try."

She served Nicole and Nina each too. "Mommy, Nina, please taste it and then tell me what you think. Next time, I will make the cake according to your preferences."

Nicole took a bite of the cake with a smile. Just like how Maya described the cake just now, the texture was soft and velvety, and the sweetness was just nice. Nicole also adored the strong milky flavor that came with each bite of the cake.

"Maya, I must say this cake really tastes great! You're amazing!"

"Not bad. Your cake actually tastes even better than those made by that famous dessert store in Y City. Daddy thinks you're incredible too!"

At the mention of the dessert store in Y City, Maya suddenly pursed her lips and looked aggrieved. "I still remember how much I used to crave for the cakes sold at that famous dessert store in Y City when I was little. However, they were too pricey and Mommy couldn't afford to buy one for me. When Mommy was working at Daddy's company as a translator, Mommy brought a mousse cake from that dessert store home one day. I can still vividly remember how the cake looked like – it was decorated with flowers made of cream. Yet, the cake tasted so horrible that I nearly cried after taking one bite... Daddy, I knew that awful cake was a prank you played on Mommy, but Nina and I ended up bearing the brunt of it! I even had a nightmare of having a heap of that cake chasing after me, chanting for me to eat them!"

Listening to Maya as she narrated a story of the past, a faint smile appeared on Nicole's face. She turned to Evan and verified Maya's story. "That really happened. To avenge their suffering, I pulled a prank back on you later on. You caught me red-handed when I was smashing your stuff in your room, and you demanded several hundred thousand from me as compensation. Sometime after that, I moved to a slum together with the kids because I was too cash-strapped."

Nina suddenly stared at Evan and questioned him, "Daddy, if you knew we were your daughters at that time, would you still separate Mommy from us?"

Would I? Evan felt conflicted as he reminisced about his past.

However, he had no definite answer to that either. There was a chance that he would still do the same thing. After all, he had no romantic feelings toward Nicole at that time. As a man of principle, he would never marry someone whom he did not love.

But then again, the kids successfully pestered him to allow Nicole to stay so that she could take care of them later on. Ever since then, he slowly saw the good side of Nicole and fell in love with her in the end.

"I can't give you a sure answer based on a hypothesis. What I can say for sure is that I hope all of us won't be separated from each other in the future. So, the two of you have to promise me that you won't marry someone who lives too far away from us. Daddy and Mommy would love to visit you whenever we like, alright?"

Don't marry someone who lives too far away from them?

Nina's heart lurched when she heard that because she was going to do something really similar soon. Daddy, I'm afraid I won't be able to fulfill that request of yours!