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“Not yet. I’m about to leave as Jacqueline has just slept. What is it?” Shane replied softly as he looked at Jacqueline sleeping soundly in the hospital bed.

Jackson shot a glance at the injury evaluation room. “It’s your lucky day. Your girl is injured and is currently seeing Dr. Wayne here.”

“What?” Narrowing his eyes, Shane’s expression tensed up. “Natalie is injured?”

“That’s right. Not only is she injured, but she is also involved in a criminal case. Do you want to come over and see her?” Jackson yawned as he asked.

Pursing his lips, Shane didn’t reply as he ended the call abruptly.

When he couldn’t hear anything, Jackson checked his phone. He adjusted his specs with a smile the moment he realized the call had ended.

It seems I’ll see him here shortly.

Just as expected, Shane barged into the consultation room in less than five minutes. When he saw that Jackson was alone in the room, he raised his eyebrows. “Where is she?”

“Inside. She should be out anytime.” Jackson pointed to the room.

As Shane watched the door, it suddenly opened after more than ten seconds. Dr. Wayne walked out with an injury evaluation report in his hand. However, Natalie still wasn’t out as she was tidying up her clothes.

“How is it?” Jackson sat up straight and asked on Shane’s behalf.

After greeting Shane, Dr. Wayne passed the report to Jackson.

However, Shane snatched it away in mid-air before Jackson could have it.

"Second-degree injury?" Shane's expression darkened when he saw the report's conclusion.

Jackson walked over to take a look. "There are ruptured capillaries under the subcutaneous skin of the shoulder. Furthermore, there are also signs of internal bleeding. It is a clear case of second-degree injury. You should give her some medication for external application."

His last sentence was directed at Dr. Wayne who nodded.

Returning to his desk, he wrote a prescription and went out to get the medication from the pharmacy.

The moment he left, Natalie stepped out of the evaluation room.

When she saw Shane standing by Jackson's side, she thought she was seeing things and couldn't help but rub her eyes. When she opened them again, he was still there.

"Mr. Shane, what are you doing here?" Tilting her head, Natalie asked quizzically.

Raising the injury evaluation report in his hand, Shane demanded to know, "It says here that it looks like you have been beaten. What's going on? Who hit you?"

Natalie was honest about it. "It was Susan."

After that, she told him about what happened outside the Design Association building.

As Jackson didn't watch the live stream, he was oblivious as to what happened today. Having heard Natalie's explanation, he widened his eyes in shock. "Damn it. Both mother and daughter are just shameless, especially Jasmine. Shane, given how unscrupulous Jasmine is, I'm starting to have doubts that she is the one who saved you back then."

Shane's eyes sparkled but didn't reply. However, he looked at Natalie instead. "You did well."

Realizing that he was praising her for getting Susan arrested, Natalie smiled in embarrassment.

At that moment, Dr. Wayne returned with the medication. Before he entered, Jackson stopped him by the door.

Taking the medication from Dr. Wayne, Jackson passed it to Shane with a smile. He whispered, "Here's your chance, go now!"

Just as he spoke, he tapped Shane on the shoulder and left, not before closing the door behind him.

Shane smirked as he looked at the few bottles of medication in his hands. He instructed, "Take off your clothes, I'll help you apply them."

Natalie was briefly stunned before she shook her head to decline. "You don't have to, Mr. Shane. I can do it myself."

Just as she spoke, she reached out for the medication in his hands.

However, Shane didn't hand it over and opened up the medication instead. The next moment, he pulled her top down to expose her shoulder.

Before Natalie realized what was going on, she felt a slight breeze on her shoulder before comprehending what he had done. Blushing, she gaped for a while before finally remarking, "Mr. Shane, you..."

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How can he do this?

Ignoring her protests, Shane squinted his eyes at the big red patch on her shoulder and stared at it coldly.

The next moment, he settled her down on the sofa and started applying the medication.

During the whole process, Natalie's body was all tensed up with both her hands clenching the hem of her dress tightly. Gritting her teeth, she looked as if she was enduring immense pain.

When he noticed her reaction, Shane lightened his touch. "Knowing how painful it was going to be, why didn't you avoid her?"

"I did, but I didn't manage to avoid her fully," Natalie replied softly with her head hung low.

Shane pursed his lips. "Every time I see you, you seem to always get yourself hurt. Can't you take better care of yourself?"

Natalie squirmed her lips. "Not that I don't want to, but it happened too quickly. It has gotten me thinking as to whether my decision to return to this city was the right one."

Her motivation for returning wasn't just because the city was her hometown. More importantly, it was the fashion capital of the country and had a thriving fashion industry. Therefore, the best career opportunities were all located here.

However, what she didn't expect was to fall in love with Shane just when she wanted to focus on her career. He was someone she wasn't supposed to fall in love with. Ever since she did, she was beset upon by neverending crises.

Having seen through her thoughts, Shane lowered his gaze. "But I'm glad you came back!"

"Huh?" Natalie was stunned. "Why?"

Shane didn't reply. All he did was cut some gauze and covered her shoulder with it.

When she didn't get a response from him, Natalie lowered her gaze in thought.

I'm sure he's glad because of Project Rebirth.

If she hadn't returned, Mr. Moore would have declined and Project Rebirth might never have gotten off the ground.

Holding that thought, Natalie let out a wry laugh.

"It's done!" Having finished applying the medication, Shane pulled her top back over her shoulder.

Natalie stood up. "Thanks, Mr. Shane. I'll need to take my leave now as I still need to drop by the police station."

"Will you return to your apartment after that?" Shane grabbed a tissue from Dr. Wayne's desk to wipe his hands wipe off the medication.

Natalie nodded. "That's right. By the time I'm done at the police station, it should be nightfall."

"I'll come along with you then." Shane threw away the tissue.

Natalie raised her eyebrow. "Are you coming with me?"

"Do you think you can drive with your arm like that?" Shane gave her the side-eye.

Natalie move her lips but nothing came out.

It was true she couldn't drive in her current condition.

"Alright, let's go. I'll drive." Just as he spoke, Shane put a hand in his pocket and led the way out.

Left without a choice, Natalie just followed him.

Back at Stanley's ward.

When Stanley saw her enter, he put down his phone. "Nat, are you done?"

"Mmm-hmm." Natalie nodded.

"How is it?"

"It's a second-degree injury." Natalie waved the report in her hand.

"Second-degree injury..." Stanley repeated it softly as his eyes sparkled for a fleeting moment. Regaining his gentle gaze, he added, "It's enough to get Susan a serious sentence."

"That's right. That's why I'm picking up the kids before I head to the police station."

Just as she spoke, she headed to the sofa and woke up the kids.

The moment they opened their eyes and saw Natalie, they jumped up and hugged her.

Letting out a tired sigh, it took some effort for Natalie to peel the children away. "Stanley, we're going off now."

"Alright." Stanley nodded with a smile as Natalie led the kids out of the ward.

Right after she left, Stanley picked up his phone and made a call, "It's me. Remember the operation that I declined to carry it out for you, I promise to do it once I recover. However, I have one condition and it is regarding a lady named Susan Sullivan. When she is released from police custody, I want you to teach her a lesson she won't forget!"

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When the person at the other end of the line agreed, Stanley let out a devious smile before ending the call. He then chucked his phone by the side.

He wasn't going to allow anyone to harm Nat. Anyone who did so would be severely punished, including the woman who wanted to take Nat's life. He swore to make her suffer miserably for her actions.

He was the only one allowed to bully Nat. Sooner or later, he endeavored to make Nat his obedient puppet, someone that will acquiesce to him her entire life.

Oblivious to Stanley's machinations, Natalie led the children to a car stopped by the roadside.

Shane was in the driver's seat. The moment he saw the three of them, he unlocked the door at the back.

Natalie opened it and ushered the children into the car.

The moment they got in, they noticed Shane and called out warmly, "Mr. Shane."

Shane acknowledged them with a gentle grunt.

Opening the front passenger's seat door, Natalie entered and put on her seatbelt. She turned to the back and looked at the kids. "Alright now, both of you. Sit tight as Mr. Shane will be driving us."

“Okay.” Both children sat obediently without moving.

With that, Shane drove them to the police station and it took them ten minutes to get there.

As Natalie had Shane stay back and watch the children, she entered the police station to hand in her injury evaluation report.

Having done so, she thought of heading to the interrogation room to check on both Susan and Jasmine.

Just when she was outside the room, she heard Susan’s terrified sobs. “Darling, please think of a way to save me and Jas.”

“Save? Can you even tell me how I am supposed to do that?” Harrison’s angry voice rang out as he banged his hands on the table. “Why don’t you reflect on what both of you have done? Jas has done something catastrophic to her career by plagiarizing!”

“That’s true. Jas did plagiarize. However, a large portion of the money she earned was used by you to save Smith Group. Why didn’t you complain about her plagiarism then? Instead, you make snide remarks when I’m pleading with you to save your daughter. Can you honestly still call yourself her father?” Susan screamed with bloodshot eyes.

Jasmine hung her head as she clenched her wheelchair tightly. Staying silent, no one knew what was going through her mind.

Outside the room, Natalie snorted in disdain.

She didn’t expect to walk in on them quarreling.

After all, she had assumed that there were a loving couple. But now, she realized that they were no different from anyone else.

Fuming, Harrison pointed at Susan with trembling fingers. “How can you accuse me of not being a proper dad? Do you think that I don’t want her saved? I’m actually powerless to do so. It would have been easier if she had plagiarized some small-time designers. I would still have been able to do something about it. But, she had to plagiarize from internationally renowned designers instead!”

“So what? Aren’t they just some lousy designers too?” Susan retorted with a smirk.

From her perspective, a fashion designer was nothing compared to a company president in terms of wealth and influence.

Harrison almost exploded in rage. "Lousy designers? You fool! You really are a stupid woman. All those famous designers are supported by a huge business network. Do you think they will just let Jas off lightly for plagiarizing them? If they intend to do anything to us, we will be done for."

Natalie nodded as Harrison was right about their situation.

When Susan saw how serious Harrison was, she began to panic. "Are... are you sure it's that severe?"

"What do you think?" Harrison glared furiously at her.

Susan began to feel fearful this time, to the extent her limbs were trembling. "In that case, what will happen to Jas? Darling, will she end up in prison?"

Harrison sighed. "Let's just take this one step at a time while I think of something. That aside, you're in here because you hit Natalie. As long as she doesn't press charges, you can go free."

"Will she withdraw the charges?" Susan mumbled.

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Harrison's facial expression turned cold. "Why not? I'm her father. As long as I order her to do so, she wouldn't dare disobey."

"You're right. You're my dad indeed. But, I'm not obligated to follow your instructions." Unable to hold herself back, Natalie barged into the room.

The three of them inside were shocked as they didn't expect to see her.

"You... you heard everything?" Harrison cough awkwardly.

In truth, he was well aware that his daughter no longer obeyed him.

Hence, he made the declaration a moment ago out of pride. Little did he expect Natalie to have heard it and humiliate him on the spot.

"That's right. I heard everything." Natalie swept her gaze across all three of them before stopping at Harrison.

Harrison fiddled with his walking cane. "In that case Nat, since you have heard what I said, can you..."

"Never!" Natalie rejected him outright knowing full well what he was going to say.

There was no way she would drop the charges and allow Susan to go scot-free.

Harrison's expression darkened at Natalie's blunt rejection.

Susan tugged his shirt behind him. "Darling, look, I told you she wouldn't agree to it."

"Shut up!" Harrison snapped.

Cringing in response, Susan shot Natalie a glare in silence.

Natalie was amused at the response.

Despite needing her help, Susan's attitude had not changed at all.

She really deserves whatever that is coming for her.

Even Jasmine looked at Susan with contempt given what an idiot she was.

"Nat." Although Harrison was exasperated by Natalie's rejection, he suppressed the anger within him and forced out a compassionate smile. He gently persuaded, "I understand that you're angry at Susan for hitting you, but she didn't do it on purpose."

"So what?" Natalie locked gazes with him calmly. "She did hit me and that is the undeniable fact."

"That's true. But she hit you because you started it." Harrison gave her a look of resentment.

"I started it?" Natalie pointed at herself, utterly stunned.

Harrison gripped his walking cane. "If not for you exposing your sister's plagiarism for no reason, she wouldn't have been arrested by the police, and Susan wouldn't have been angry at you."

"That's how it is!" Susan thrust her chin forward in agreement.

Natalie was shocked by how preposterous their reasoning was.

To them, everything was her fault.

"My goodness. You can just do no wrong!" Natalie clenched her fists as she swept her gaze across the three of them.

In the face of her contemptuous gaze, Harrison averted his eyes in guilt but Jasmine and Susan felt nothing at all.

He was cognizant of how ridiculous his words were, but he had no choice given how desperate he was to save Susan and Jasmine.

Holding to that thought, he cleared his throat and continued, "Nat, since you caused the whole incident, why don't you show some mercy and let it go?"

"Over my dead body!" Natalie's eyes reddened. "Dad, you have said so yourself that I started the whole thing. Given how much Susan hates me, what am I going to do when she seeks revenge? Hence, it's better for her to stay here for a few days to reflect upon her own actions."

With that, Natalie ignored them and left.

She was worried that the longer she stayed, the more outraged she would become.

After all, other than handing in her injury evaluation report, she also came to gloat at Susan and Jasmine. Now that she had seen them in their misery, she could leave happily.

"How... how dare she!" Susan pointed at Natalie's silhouette and complained, "Darling, look at her. That's your own daughter for goodness sake. And yet, she doesn't even listen to you!"

Harrison's expression darkened in silence.

He was now fully aware that both Yulia's children only saw him as a father in name. Other than that, he meant nothing to them. Therefore, they were not going to listen to whatever he said.

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An indescribable feeling engulfed Harrison. It felt like an emptiness was spreading throughout his chest.

"That's enough, Mom. What's the point of saying these things now? Natalie hates us. Why would she get us out if she was the one who sent us here? Just stop begging her!" Jasmine scolded.

She had stayed silently in the corner this whole time. Now that she finally spoke, her voice spat venomously. It brought an uncomfortable chill to those listening.

Susan's lips parted. Before she could speak, Harrison raised his hand to stop her and said, "No. We'll continue begging her!"

"Dad?" Jasmine glared at him with discontentment.

Harrison growled back in a deep voice, "What else can we do? Both your fates are in her hands!"

"Especially yours!" He pointed at Jasmine. "Natalie has evidence of your plagiarism. Before we got here, I heard that the Design Association plans to have her as a witness in court. Based on the quantity of plagiarism and the amount you earned from it, you'll be sentenced to at least five years in jail. But if Natalie gives false testimony, or doesn't attend court as a witness, then maybe your sentence will be lighter."

Hearing this, Jasmine had nothing else to say.

I'm going to jail regardless. But if I can reduce my sentence by two years, why not?

No matter how slow-witted Susan was, even she understood that Natalie was not to be messed with at this point. Although she felt unwilling, she had no choice. She bit down on

her lip and said, "But Darling, she won't even drop charges against me. Why would she agree to give false testimony or don't turn up in court?"

"Yeah, that's the biggest problem," Harrison sighed. His temples tightened and he could feel a headache coming.

Susan squinted her eyes. "This won't work, let's just win over the public opinion and use that against her."

"How do you mean?" Harrison looked at her.

Jasmine's interest was piqued too.

Susan tiptoed and whispered into Harrison's ear.

After listening to her, Harrison's eyes gleamed brightly as he nodded. "Got it. I'll start planning right away."

With that, he clutched onto his walking cane and left the interrogation room.

Harrison was ready to sign the necessary forms in the police station's lobby before leaving.

Coincidentally, Natalie hadn't left and was still signing the forms. Once she saw him, she hastily finished up and left without saying even a word.

Harrison watched her figure shrink in the distance. He rubbed his chin as if he wanted to say something. But in the end, he didn't.

Natalie exited the police station and headed for the red Mercedes that was parked on the roadside.

As soon as she approached the car, the passenger door opened.

Shane retracted his hand after opening the car door. "Why has taken you so long?"

"Yeah, Mommy! Connor and I have waited for a long time," Shannon said. She was seated in the back on a child's seat and was kicking her legs casually.

"Mm-hmm." Connor nodded along.

Natalie fastened her seatbelt. She smiled and said, "I met Harrison at the police station. We talked for a while, hence the delay."

Shane observed her. He frowned after seeing that her eyes were still bloodshot. "Did he tell you something or make things difficult for you?"

Natalie was surprised by how he saw straight through her. Lowering her eyelids, she hummed, "He asked me to withdraw my charges against Susan, but I refused to do that."

"You shouldn't agree to such requests. Once you do that, they'll get arrogant and start using your kindness against you," Shane said as he started the car.

Natalie massaged her tense eyebrows. "I know. That's why I was firm and held my ground this time."

"Well done," Shane praised. His lips curved slightly upwards.

Natalie pondered for some time, then thanked him.

Not long after, they arrived at the apartment.

Natalie held her children's hands and said goodbye to Shane at the apartment door before going in.

Inside, she placed the flowers on the coffee table. Carrying the bag that contained her medal and certificate, she went into her room for a change of clothes.

The rest of Natalie's day was simple. She whipped up a quick meal in the kitchen, then ate with her two kids, and finally, she took a bath and retired for the day.

So much had happened today. Everything exhausted her to the bone, so she fell asleep as soon as her head hit the pillow.

She slept until the next morning when a phone call from Joyce awoke her. "Nat, something bad happened!"