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Indeed, even if I don't think for myself, I need to think about Ashton.

He's almost thirty-five, and it's a suitable age to have children now. If he wanted it after Summer is older, I'm afraid it'll be even more difficult to get pregnant.

Seeing that I was pondering, she patted my hand calmly. "There, there. There's no need to overthink things. I'm just giving my advice. Everyone has their considerations in life, but you need to leave room for maneuver."

When we reached the garden, we found a place to sit down. I couldn't help thinking about her and John. Thus, I ended up asking out of curiosity, "Is there a plan between you and John to get married?"

If they did not officially get married, what would happen to the child?

Although John apparently could solve it with some money, it was ultimately unfair to Hannah.

When she heard my question, she appeared a little dazed and gave a melancholy smile. "It is a great blessing to be able to have his child. As for the marriage, I'm afraid I'm not the one for him."

I frowned, somewhat displeased. "What are you saying? Why are you belittling yourself like this? You love him and are willing to bear his child. The Stovall family should definitely give you this status. If you don't consider it for yourself, think about it for your child!"

She smiled helplessly. "Scarlett, I am not you. If only I were an orphan like you, although my life would have been difficult, at least I wouldn't have grown up in such a lowly situation."

I was stunned for a moment, puzzled. "You..."

"I was born and raised in Southeast Asia. My mother was a woman who grew poppies in Kingcircle Town. You know, none of the kids who grew up there had a normal life. Before the age of twenty, I always thought that what we experienced back there were normal – killing, fighting, and substance abuse. It was not until I met John that I realized that girls could grow up in a much better environment without having to go through all these."

I could not imagine what kind of environment she used to live in. So for a while, I was unable to respond to her words.

She then touched her belly with a gentle expression on her face. “But fortunately, I can raise my child in a good environment. This blessing is already more than what I could ever deserve.”

There was a moment of silence before I spoke my mind. “Maybe Uncle Louis wouldn’t mind where you’re from?”

Even if she had another nationality, it did not mean anything. She could not have decided on her birthplace.

She smiled and grabbed my hand. “Thank you, Scarlett. But even if they can accept me, I won’t marry John. He deserves better.”

After thinking for a while, I realized that it was their own business, after all. Therefore, it would not be appropriate if I intervened too much.

With that, I did not say anything anymore but just sighed.

We were in the garden for quite some time now, so I said to her, “Let’s go back. Or else they might be searching for us.”

She nodded as carrying a huge bump around was not that easy. Whether it was sitting or standing for a long time, she would have muscle soreness.

The ambiance along the stone path was a little quiet. Just then, a young woman’s charming voice sounded abruptly from a distance away.

“Mr. Stovall, thank you for everything.” The voice sounded unfamiliar.

I couldn’t help but gave a side glance. At that moment, I saw a familiar face, and it was John. Standing beside him was that assistant who came along with Nick earlier.

I did not take a good look at her face when she came in. Hence, only now I realized this young woman looked familiar, but I could not remember where I had seen her.

I took Hannah over to greet them. But before we got close, I saw the woman leaning in towards John and said coquettishly, “Ah...”

Obviously, she had sprained her ankle, and John was gentlemanly enough to reach out his hand to help her.

That scene appeared to be normal at first, but that woman went too far. She was now practically lying in his arms. I could not help but frown at that. Subconsciously, I glanced at Hannah, but for some reason, she was expressionless.

Hannah is probably used to this.

Feeling uneasy, I voiced out, "Wait for me here."

Right then, John had noticed that I was nearing them and immediately pulled his distance from that woman. "It's cold outside, so don't be out here too long. It's easy to catch a cold."

I nodded and responded, "Your wife is right there. You should go and find her."

He frowned when he heard me calling Hannah as his "wife." Obviously, he seemed a little upset, but he was not able to retort at that moment. Hence, he nodded since there was nothing else he could do.

That woman who had been leaning on him was surprised to see me, and she stood up straight.

After John left, I, too, was about to leave since there was no point staying there anymore. It wasn't like I wanted to chat with that woman anyway.

"Ms. Stovall, do you remember me?"

Stunned for a moment, I turned my attention towards her. My gaze fell on her delicate makeup, but it did not ring a bell.

Nick was a workaholic, but he also always seemed to be generous to his employees. There were luxury brands all over her body, which all of them appeared to be of the latest trend.

"Do we know each other?" I really could not recall where I met her before. I just knew that I did not like her frivolous behavior with Nick.

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She smiled slightly with her attractive face. "We met four years ago in the capital. At that time, it was in Ms. Moore's nightclub. You and Mr. Stovall saved me."

Four years was a long time ago, so I could hardly recall that memory. "What's your name?" I asked.

"Yvonne Wilde." She introduced herself. "I was still in college four years ago. Mr. Stovall introduced me to the Harrison Credit to work for Mr. Harrison."

Gradually, I started to remember that John and I seemed to come across a bullied young woman at Emery's nightclub back then. At that time, we could not stand it, so we got ourselves involved.

It was also because of this incident that I met Emery. Later, it seemed like John had introduced this young woman to Nick's company. She used to be just a part-timer. But now, it appeared that she had worked her way up over the years.

I nodded and forced a smile. "Well, that's good!"

Right after that, I turned around and got ready to leave. To my dismay, she followed up and continued to chat with me. However, I did not particularly enjoy the conversation.

When we reached the room, John and Hannah had already returned. Seeing that Yvonne and I were together, Ashton glanced at Yvonne but said nothing.

He got up and said to me, "I ordered some soup for you. Drink some later to warm up your body."

It was freezing outside, and my limbs became stiff after standing for a long time. Ashton, being the darling he was, held my hand to warm me up.

Jackson scrutinized me, then at Yvonne. "Why are you both together?"

Yvonne explained, "I met her in the garden, and we had a short chat. I haven't seen Ms. Stovall for four years. I have always wanted to thank her."

"Since when did you know each other?" Jackson was puzzled.

"Four years ago!" she looked at John while explaining. "Four years ago, if Mr. Stovall and Ms. Stovall did not lend a helping hand, I wouldn't be able to survive. I am happy to be able to meet you two today and say thank you."

I had a feeling that her intention at the moment was not that pure, but I couldn't tell why.

John frowned as if he had forgotten her existence a long time ago. Nevertheless, he did not speak much and kept his thoughts to himself.

Meanwhile, Hannah hesitated for a while but remained silent once again.

Just then, Emery studied Yvonne and raised her eyebrows. "The two of you are truly kind. This girl's life was transformed because of you. Props to you two!"

Obviously, this phrase was meant for me and John.

After a pause, she continued, "Ms. Wilde, I'd reckon you to not worry about it since they probably had long forgotten about it as well."

Yvonne grinned and responded, "I was rescued, so how could I possibly forget about it?"

Hearing that, Emery teased, "In that case, you should give yourself to him!"

Yvonne blushed for a while and did not know how to react to this abrupt joke.

At that, Emery curled her lips. She had always been a very straightforward person. "The best way to be grateful is to leave your savior alone. Otherwise, it might be more like revenge, isn't it, Mr. Stovall?"

Why does it feel like there's another meaning to this?

Nonetheless, John continued to keep mum. Just then, the waiter had brought in the soup and placed it in front of Hannah, silently acquiescing to Emery's words.

After we finished dinner, it was already quite late. Since Emery always went to bed early, she dragged Hunter and left together instantly.

On the other hand, Jackson and Nick appeared to have some business, so they left, leaving Yvonne behind alone. She seemed to feel a little awkward.

Before Nick left, he asked her to take a cab. But it was a private restaurant, so it would not be easy to find a cab around the area.

At the same time, Ashton did not seem to care for that at all as he led me into the car and prepared to leave too.

I noticed Yvonne was saying something to John and Hannah at that moment. As soon as she finished, John nodded, appearing to agree about something.

Then Yvonne got in the car, and John got in too. The car left right away, but Hannah was left alone.

I was shocked by what I saw. What the heck just happened? Did they quarrel? How could he leave Hannah all alone?

“Turn around!” I pulled at Ashton’s clothes forcefully without hesitation.

Ashton glanced into the rearview mirror. He also frowned when he saw Hannah standing alone in the chilly wind.

Immediately, he turned the car around and head towards the restaurant.

As soon as we reached, I got out of the car and stared at Hannah. Her cheeks had become reddish due to the windy weather. “What’s the matter? Why are you still here?”

Hannah replied softly, “He’ll be sending Ms. Wilde back, and their chauffeur will pick me up in a while.”

I was left speechless at that.

Is John out of his mind? What the hell?

Trying hard to control my anger, I helped her into Ashton’s car and asked her to told the chauffeur not to come.

Then, I dialed John’s number furiously.

After a few rings, the phone connected. “Hey, Scarlett! What’s wrong?”

“John, are you freakin’ crazy? Did you just leave your wife all alone to send another woman home? What’s the matter with you?”

Hannah didn’t expect that I had called John. Clearly startled, she tried to stop me from saying anything further. “Scarlett, don’t. I’m alright.”

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I patted her hand and whispered, “It’s okay!”

On the other end of the call, John was taken aback momentarily. “I’ll send someone to pick her up. Don’t worry.”

I tried to keep my anger at bay, even though I felt that he had really gone overboard. “For goodness’ sake, John, this is your pregnant wife! What’s wrong with you?”

What on earth was going on in his head that made him leave his wife along the road while he sent another unknown woman home?

“Scarlett, I have no intentions of marrying her. She’s just a reproductive tool to me. You don’t have to treat her as you would a sister-in-law. Once I’ve met the woman I want to marry, I’ll introduce you to her. Besides, don’t worry, our chauffeur and maid will take good care of Hannah. I know how I should treat her too. Right now, I just want you to rest well and don’t overthink things.”

John may not have been speaking loudly, but Hannah was seated close enough to me that she could hear every word he said.

The call ended right after that, and I was left speechless.

I looked up at Hannah, whose face had drained of all color. She was clearly hurting on the inside, but she still put on a smile and reassured me that she was alright.

I could see tears welling up in her eyes as she averted my gaze and looked out the car window. Was she trying to hide her pain from me?

My heart went out to her as she reminded me of my old self.

Silence filled the entire journey as Ashton sent her back to John's villa. As soon as we reached, a maid came out to greet us and bowled us over with her impeccable service.

After saying our goodbyes, Ashton and I drove off. He realized how quiet and teary-eyed I was and got rather concerned. "What are you thinking about?"

His voice brought me back to my senses. Then, I leaned back in my seat and turned to him. "Ashton, do you still remember the day you picked me up from the hospital four years ago?"

He pursed his lips, gently tapping the steering wheel as he tried to recall. "Yes. I do remember."

When I didn't offer a reply, he added, "What about it?"

"I had just done my ultrasound scan that day, and the baby was six weeks old. I didn't expect you to be waiting to pick me up. When I got in the car, I kept wondering if you'd change your mind about the divorce if you had known I was pregnant. Then again, I was so conflicted about it. If I used the baby as a means to trap you in our marriage, that would have been highly unreasonable of me."

Not making eye contact with him, I lowered my gaze to my nails. They seemed rather long now.

I continued after a moment of silence, "After Rebecca had a miscarriage, I saw how you pampered and cared for her. I was determined to get that divorce and keep the baby, and so I faked an abortion. But little did I know that you would fall for me in the end, and..."

The car came to a gentle stop by the road. After that, Ashton tilted my chin up to meet his brooding gaze.

I was so stunned by the gesture that I didn't know how to respond.

His eyes darkened as he spoke in a low, raspy voice, "I wanted a divorce because I wasn't sure if I could take good care of you wholeheartedly. I didn't want to invest too much emotion in it, for fear of it hurting even more when we broke up."

Right then, his breath that landed on my face felt especially hot. "Do you blame me?" he asked.

I shook my head at that. "That's all in the past now. I was only thinking about how similar Hannah and I are, standing by someone who doesn't love us. How much lower can we go?"

Nonetheless, Ashton kept his gaze on me. "We'd be so lucky if we can be with our loved ones without hurting anyone else."

His words were mixed with self-reproach, and I could understand why he felt that way. I wrapped my arms around his neck and laid my head against his chest. "Ashton, I don't blame you," I said earnestly. "We're the same. We've never been taught how to love somebody else. Yes, we may have lost a lot along the way as we slowly figured things out. But fortunately for us, we finally understood the feelings we have for each other."

After a pause, I continued, "I hope John can soon figure out what his heart really wants."

After all, Hannah had been with John for ten years. During this time, she had never felt like she deserved to be doted on. She took care of John more than a mother would. He had many women come and go in his life, yet it never once bothered her. Whether he loved her or not, she could always convince herself to come to terms with it.

Even when she was hurting, she could hide it so well in public. She would suppress her grief, only to deal with it when she was all alone.

John was already used to her being around. Thus, if she were to leave one day, he might not be able to carry on.

In the meantime, the traffic had eased off a bit. Seeing that, Ashton planted a kiss on my forehead before driving off slowly.

Once we got home, Summer was already sound asleep. I checked in on her after I had washed up to make sure she was tucked in.

When I got out of Summer's room, Ashton had also just come out of the shower. He towel-dried himself and sat on the couch while looking at his phone.

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Seeing that it was already getting late, I told him. "Ashton, it's time for bed."

Ashton put down his phone. Just then, the corner of his mouth turned up in a small smile as he set his penetrating dark eyes on me.

I pursed my lips and looked at him. I had always found this smile of his far too charming to be real.

“Why are you smiling?”

His eyes lit up as he exclaimed, “I’m happy!”

Well, duh, but what about?

He didn’t elaborate anymore. And since I didn’t want to probe any further, I made my way to the bedroom.

The sound of footsteps behind me got closer, and I soon found myself in Ashton’s tight embrace. His voice was low and sensual as he whispered, “You’re so pretty when you nag.”

“Could you be any cheesier?” I mocked.

Seriously, though, why would anyone like to be nagged at?

Brushing away my sarcastic remark, Ashton cuddled me as we got into bed. He then moved his palm onto my lower abdomen and asked softly, “Does it hurt?”

I froze for a moment. I had genuinely forgotten about the pain I had to endure when it got to my time of the month. He actually remembered?

As I shook my head, I couldn’t help but laugh. “Can’t believe you remembered even though you’re so busy with work. Sorry to have worried you.”

He smiled faintly. “I peeked at the memo on the phone.”

Oh... clever!

As I thought about Hannah’s words, I turned around and met Ashton’s gaze. “Ashton, shall we go to the doctor tomorrow and remove the vasectomy clips?”

His smile faded. "What's wrong?"

I wasn't sure how to put it across. Previously, Jared had mentioned that keeping the vasectomy clips in for a long time would be bad for the body. It might even result in infertility. I really had expected Ashton to get them removed earlier. But so many years had passed, and he still hadn't shown any desire to do so.

"I... want a child of our own!" I exclaimed. Though that statement might not be entirely true, I just needed an excuse to get him to remove the clips.

He narrowed his gaze as he said solemnly, "It's not time yet."

"Why?" I raised a quizzical eyebrow.

"There are two reasons why Jared hasn't fought for Summer's custody. Firstly, you've raised her for almost five years now. Secondly, we have good financial and social standings to continue to care for Summer. If I reversed my vasectomy and got you pregnant, Jared would then have better chances of getting custody of Summer should he wish to proceed with it."

Ashton's voice was low and even. Even though he kept his emotions out of it, one could still hear a hint of helplessness within.

If both parties had similar financial and social standings, it'd be a fair fight in the eyes of the law. Hence, I could lose Summer's custody.

Seeing as how I remained silent, Ashton took my hand in his. "No hurry. We'll still have plenty of chances at having a baby in the future."

"But having the clips on for too long isn't good for your body. And besides, even after removing them, we don't have to try for a baby immediately." Even if Jared planned to fight for Summer's custody, we didn't have to use this as a means to stop him from doing so. In the worst-case scenario, I'd ask Louis for help. I was sure he'd have a way to deal with Jared.

He chuckled. "Worried for me?"

I pursed my lips before saying, "Ashton Fuller, I want you to think about this seriously. If we want children, we ought to do it soon. The older I get, the more dangerous a high-risk

pregnancy would be. If you lose both mother and child from that, you'd have to find yourself a new wife."

My words weren't entirely true, but I wouldn't rule out the possibility of having children. I knew he chose not to get the vasectomy reversal because of me and Summer.

He was aware of how important Summer was to me. If I lost her, my condition might worsen too. That was why he could bear with not having children of his own.

However, there was still so much to look forward to in our lives. Love felt forever only in the present moment, and no one could guarantee an eternity of it as time went on.

It would be nice to be honest with each other while we lived and loved in the present.

Ashton hugged me tightly. "Never!" he exclaimed, his voice low and magnetic. That single word was so ambiguous. Did he mean he would never lose me and our child or that he would never remarry?

I slept very soundly that night. Even though I had a few vivid dreams, I couldn't remember any of them when I woke up.

It was already nine in the morning when I opened my eyes. It really had been a long sleep.

I was surprised when I saw Ashton still in the room. "Don't you have to go to the office today?"

He smiled faintly, still comfortably dressed in his custom royal blue pajamas. "It's the weekend. I'm taking a day off to be with you!"

I smiled back at him and shifted slightly in bed. When I felt something wet underneath, my heart started to race.

I might have stained the bed, but I needed to be sure. As I gingerly touched the sheets, the dampness I felt confirmed my suspicion.

It felt like I had stained quite a large area which meant that the mattress would also need to be cleaned. This might be the heaviest flow I've had since coming back to K City.

Having noticed the change in my expression, Ashton couldn't help but ask, "Is your stomach not feeling well?"

I shook my head, trying to hide my embarrassment. "Summer should be up by now. Why don't you check on her? She must be hungry."

He nodded wordlessly.

I was so relieved when he finally left the room. But as I got out of bed and saw the state of the sheets, I gasped.

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What the heck? Did the pipes just burst or something...

The stain on the gray bedsheet was so large that it looked as if a bucket of water had been splashed on it. It was a frightening sight to behold – even for me.

I hurriedly got into the bathroom with a clean set of clothes to change into. It was only then I realized how badly stained my clothes were.

As I stepped out of the bathroom, I was shocked to see Ashton making the bed. He had already replaced the bloodied sheets with fresh, clean ones. Thankfully the mattress was waterproof, so it was easy enough to wipe it clean.

Just as Ashton was about to reach for the dirty sheets on the rug, I rushed forward and picked them up. "I'll do it!" I cried out, face red from the embarrassment.

He frowned and replied, "The weather's cold. Let me handle it."

"No... you don't have to!" No matter how close a relationship was, it was never appropriate to have someone else clean up this sort of mess.

Ashton gazed at me with an unreadable expression. "Don't worry about it. Just let me wash that."

Before I could open my mouth to protest against it, he had already grabbed the sheets.

Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that one of the most prominent businessmen in K City would be rolling up his sleeves and washing a bunch of dirty sheets in the bathroom.

The stained pajama pants soaking in the basin had also turned the water red. It was a sight that was hard to miss, and Ashton had clearly noticed it.

Despite so, he remained cool as a cucumber as he poured the dirty water away and added detergent. "Has your stomach been hurting these days?"

"No!" I shook my head. I had been in R Province for the past four years. Taking care of Summer had resulted in an irregular life with frequent long nights. As such, it was common for me to suffer from body aches and exhaustion. Apart from that, everything else was fine.

Seeing Ashton washing the sheets made me so embarrassed that I could feel my face burning up. After some hesitation, I decided to leave the bathroom.

At that time, Summer was practicing her cycling in the living room downstairs. It didn't pose much of a hindrance since it was a huge space.

Upon seeing me, her face lit up. "Mommy, look! I can cycle now!" she shouted in excitement.

She started cycling again to show off how good she was getting. That explained why she had been quiet all this time. She had been practicing really hard on her bicycle.

"Have you had breakfast?" I asked as I walked towards the kitchen.

Summer nodded, still preoccupied with her bicycle. "Mr. Fuller came by earlier and gave me breakfast and pastries. I've already eaten my share. He said you'd be coming down soon to eat, so I didn't call you."

I nodded. True enough, I saw the breakfast spread on the kitchen table.

We didn't hire a housekeeper, only a part-time maid who came punctually to clean up the place.

Previously, we had a housekeeper take care of Summer before we came back to the Stovall residence. But after hearing what she had been telling Summer, I became warier of outsiders.

Summer was still young after all, and it was important to watch our words around her. If we had an outsider live with us, I wouldn't be able to check in on her whenever I liked or keep track of what they had been telling her.

Hence, it just felt better to do it myself.

When I returned to the bedroom, Ashton had already finished washing the sheets and my pajama.

I stood silently behind him as he hung them up to dry. Right then, I could feel my cheeks flushing up again.

Realizing that I was there, he turned around and look at me with a gentle gaze. "Had your breakfast yet?"

I nodded and walked toward him. Wrapping my arms around his waist, I whispered, "Thank you!"

He grabbed some tissue to wipe his hand dry before focusing his attention on me. "What are you thanking me for?" He chuckled.

I tried to reply, but no words came out. My eyes were getting watery when I gazed back at Ashton. "Just wanted to thank you," I blurted out.

He laughed and pulled me in closer. "Don't go anywhere else today. Just have a good rest in bed."

As he said that, he swept me off my feet and carried me to the bed. Frankly speaking, I thought he was overreacting, so I giggled. "I'm alright!"

Ashton said nothing as he left me in bed and went downstairs. Even though he had taken the day off, he had been bustling around the house since morning. Work kept him busy, yet he still had to take care of me and Summer when he got home.

As I thought about that, I couldn't help but blame myself for having inconvenienced him again.

It was impossible to fall asleep now. It was cold outside, so going out was a no-no. But staying home sounded boring too.

With that, I made up my mind to head to the study. Reading to pass the time definitely sounded like a better idea.

I had only reached the bedroom door when I bumped into Ashton carrying a bowl of ginger carrot soup. I thought he had gone downstairs for breakfast, yet here he was...

Glancing at the bowl of soup in his hands, I shook my head. "I've only just had my breakfast. I don't have the appetite for anything else now."

I had stopped throwing up in the past few days, but I still had to watch my food intake. My stomach would churn if I overate, and I'd find myself dry-heaving.

Ashton knew that better than me and didn't force me to drink the soup. After that, he placed the bowl in our room and said, "You can eat it later when it's cooled down."

I nodded, knowing that he was just worried about me. "I want to go read in the study. Do you want to come along?" I asked.

He raised his eyebrows, took my hand, and led us to the study.

The decoration of the study in this new villa had taken Summer's needs into consideration, so it was vastly different from what we had in the previous villa.