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Hailey still looked pale, and she nodded at Armond stiffly. She seems scared. Is it because of him?

Nora was a bit of an airhead, so she didn't notice Hailey's expression. She turned to Armond. "This is Hailey, my friend. She lives in A City, just like me."

Armond smiled gently at her. "Hello. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Hailey was trembling slightly as she shook his hand. "Hello," she whispered almost inaudibly.

Thinking that Hailey was just being shy around strangers, Nora smiled. "She's a shy one, so socializing's not her forte. Alright, let's start the barbecue. We're starving here."

Armond smiled and went into the kitchen, followed by Nora.

I grabbed Hailey, then she dragged me out of the kitchen. Her hands were as cold as ice, obviously shocked from the meeting. She then downed a glass of water to calm herself.

Instead of asking her straight off, I waited for her to get a hold of herself. A short while later, she looked at me. "He's evil."

I paused for a moment. I knew she was talking about Armond, so I asked, "Do you know him."

She nodded, then sat on the sofa and looked at the kitchen. "I've seen him before, but it has been quite a while since then," she whispered.

I was going to ask more, but Nora and Armond were already back with the kebabs, while Hannah and Chandler made sure the flames were still roaring. Since everyone was going to dig in, I held my question.

I observed Armond while we were barbecuing, but he didn't seem to know Hailey. How does Hailey know him and she's even terrified.

"You're spacing out again. What's up with you?" Hannah handed me some food. "You have lost some weight. Here, have some kebab."

I snapped out of it and nodded at her.

Armond squinted. "Indeed. I heard about your daughter. Tell us if you need any help."

"Yeah, you don't have to do everything alone, Scarlett." Nora nodded

I forced a smile. "Okay."

Armond had some of his juice and looked at me. "Your daughter needs a bone marrow and kidney transplant, doesn't she? It won't be easy to get the ones she needs. How's it going right now?"

The moment he said that Hailey accidentally smashed the sauce bowl before her. She apologized and quickly cleaned it up, and Nora helped. "It's fine. I can do this myself." Hailey wiped the sauce off her clothes.

All the color had drained from her face, as if she was horrified about something. I had a strong feeling she knew something about Armond, much to my surprise.

Everyone sat back down once the mess was cleared up. Nora looked at me. "It won't be easy to get a kidney transplant for a child, especially a matching one." She turned to Armond. "Can you help her?"

Armond gave me a cryptic look. "I am sure there is a way."

"Really?" Nora stared at him with excitement as she waited for his answer, but Armond only arched his eyebrow at me. "Let's focus on the barbecue for now. We can talk about it after we're done eating."

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Nora pondered on it. "Yeah, sure."

I held Hailey's hand again. Much to my surprise, it was still ice-cold despite the heater in the house. That told me the extent of her fear for Armond.

Hailey threw a look of terror at me, while I nodded at her and patted her hand to give her some courage.

Hannah gave me some greens, but I didn't dig in. "Snap out of it, Scarlett. You haven't touched your food. Can't work up an appetite?"

I looked at the little mountain of food on my plate. "No. I'm digging in right now, okay?"

She beamed. "I've never had a barbecue before I met Chandler. It's really awesome, you know. I can get addicted to it."

Chandler blushed, then he gave her a piece of meat. "Dig in then. I can barbecue for you anytime you want."

"You guys are totally gloating. That's gross," Nora threw shades at them, but she did the same thing with Armond with a smile on her face.

Nothing bad happened during the barbecue though. Once we cleared the table up, Hannah and Chandler went back to their place. Nora held my hand and told Armond, "Take her home, Armond. I can't let her hitch a ride alone."

"She can come with us then." Hannah turned to Nora. "And her place is on our way home too."

Before Nora could say anything, Armond interrupted, "Same here. It won't be too much of a problem for us."

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Nora grinned. "I don't think a happy couple like you should bring a third wheel along. Let Armond take care of this."

Hannah wanted to retort, but Chandler whispered something and stopped her.

Then, Ashton called me. I took the call, and he said, "I just finished my meeting. Are you hungry?"

I felt more at ease after hearing his voice, then I went to the balcony. "No. Just had barbecue with my friends. Nora came today, and Hannah's around too, so I was going to call you over, but you were working, so that's that. Have you eaten though?" He just got out of the meeting, so I thought he must be hungry.

He chuckled. "Sounds like I missed out on a feast. Where are you? I'll pick you up. Can you make some pasta for me?"

I smiled. "It's not really good, you know. I'm at Nora's place. It's in the city center. Armond's here too, so can you come over?"

He was quiet for a moment. "Sure." Armond and us weren't friends anymore, so that was the only way I could deal with Armond for the time being.

I made small talk before sending him my location, then I noticed Holden's message. 'Why didn't you call me for so long, woman? Nora's an idiot. Telling her is just going to be a waste of my time.'

Oh, it was probably about the thing I asked him earlier. I texted back before keeping my phone. I see.

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Hailey sat quietly in a corner, trying to lay low. Armond and Nora were doing the dishes in the kitchen, so I sat down beside her and handed her a glass of water. "Did you come here for work?"

She took the glass of water and looked up at me. "The company needs clients." She nodded. "I have to make the sales to keep it running."

I looked at her silently. "Running a company doesn't suit you. You should pursue your hobbies instead."

"My father founded the company. It doesn't matter if I like it or not, I have to hold the fort until he's free. I'll keep it running for as long as I can hold it."

She's stubborn. I guess there's no point in persuading her. I nodded and shrugged. "Good luck."

She glanced at me for a moment. "What's your daughter down with?"

"Leukemia."

She stared down. "She needs a kidney transplant on top of a bone marrow, right?"

I nodded.

She pondered about something silently, gripping the glass of water. "I had a heart transplant before."

I was surprised she'd tell me about that. I stared at her, and she smiled at me, but she still looked pale. "It was five years ago. I think my father was looking desperately for a heart just like what you're doing now. I can't imagine how tortured he must have felt then."

I didn't reply to that. For some reason, I thought there was something more to her case. A short pause later, she continued, "You're right. Running a company isn't what I like. I love to paint. My dream was to open my own art exhibition all over the world, but I don't think that can be done now."

I thought Hailey had depression to begin with, but I realized she had something worse. She looked like a normal girl from the outside, but her attitude told me she disliked human interactions.

She was more like an autistic person than a depressed one. Hailey tried her best to look normal, but she disliked talking to anyone from the bottom of her heart.

"Did you have something to tell me? Was that why you wanted to see me?"

She stared at me, her gaze clean and innocent. She had something to say, but she hesitated, so I advised, "It's fine if you don't want to tell me about it right now, but you can talk to me whenever you want to. I don't know why you're trying to talk to me even though you dislike me, but I know you have your reasons for that."

I knew she had something to tell me, but she had no idea how to say it. All she did was stare for a while and looked down in silence. It was hard to get any information from someone with a mental illness, so I didn't force her to talk. Then I looked outside into the night. Everyone has a battle we can't see, huh?

"Armond is evil. Even Satan's a nice guy compared to him," she muttered, her voice trembling.

I looked at her again. She was pale, and her fists were red from being clenched too tightly. Obviously, she had a great struggle with herself before telling me that short message.