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Damn! Jacqueline really is smart, I'll give her that. By handing the deliveryman the package at the parcel locker and having him deliver it along the way, she wouldn't need to write anything under the sender's information column. Natalie looked up at the ceiling and let out a sigh.

"I know this package has caused you great distress, but I really didn't mean for it to happen. I—"

Natalie cut him off, "I know, you were just helping someone out of kindness. However, your act of kindness has also resulted in someone being severely traumatized. I can let this incident slide, but you must remember this lesson you've learned today."

"Yes, of course. Don't worry, ma'am. Our company will penalize him accordingly! How does a deduction in his annual bonus sound?" the manager asked with an apologetic smile.

Natalie nodded slightly. "Sure."

She didn't want to cause the deliveryman any trouble, but she wanted him to learn a lesson.

Had she been the one who opened the package instead of Sally, she would surely have been scared a lot more.

On top of that, Natalie was pregnant right now, so a huge shock like that could actually cause harm to her baby.

Given the seriousness of the situation, she firmly believed that the deliveryman would think twice about helping random strangers deliver packages like that again.

That way, Jacqueline would no longer be able to send them any more packages.

The manager then gave them some gifts as compensation before quickly leaving with the deliveryman.

"I bet that deliveryman hates whoever that sender was now!" Sally exclaimed while rubbing her cheek.

Natalie kept quiet and seemed to be in deep thought, her head hung low.

She then looked up at Sally after a while and asked, "Hey, Sal, could you help me run an errand?"

"What is it?" Sally asked.

"I was thinking of installing more spy cameras around the villa. That way, Jacqueline would think twice before showing up here," Natalie replied with a sigh.

Sally agreed to it immediately, "Sure, I'll get to it right away. Leave it to me!"

Natalie flashed her a smile. "Thanks!"

"Don't mention it. Right, I'll be heading out now!" Sally said while waving at her. CLICK HERE TO JOIN OUR TELEGRAM CHANNEL FOR FAST UPDATES <u>https://t.me/NovelsFuns</u>

"Okay."

Instead of staying in the living room, Natalie got up and went upstairs after Sally left.

Her two kids were still sleeping soundly due to the sudden time zone difference.

Natalie had been staying up until then to adjust her sleep schedule, and it happened to be nighttime in Chanaea at the time.

Since she was pregnant and feeling extremely tired, Natalie didn't dare force herself to stay up and went back to sleep in her bedroom as well.

It was already the next morning by the time she woke up, and the bodyguards had finished installing the spy cameras that Sally purchased.

With spy cameras set up all over the villa and covering up to a 100-yard radius, it felt as if the security level had increased several times over.

Natalie felt a lot safer leaving her two kids at home while participating in the competition.

"Hey, Nat! Are you heading over to the magazine company afterward?" Sally asked during breakfast.

"Yeah," Natalie replied, placing her glass of milk down.

As the competition would only start tomorrow, she had the entire day to herself and decided to submit her design to the magazine company.

"In that case, I'll go with you. I got another photo shoot from the magazine company," Sally said.

"Sure!" Natalie replied.

Her kids exchanged glances and said in unison, "We want to go too, Mommy!"

"All right, but only if you two behave yourselves," Natalie said with a chuckle.

I'll be busy with the competition tomorrow, so I might as well spend more time with them today.

The kids clapped happily upon hearing that. "Yay!"

The four of them then headed out after breakfast.

Sally got started with her photo shoot upon arrival at the magazine company. Natalie, on the other hand, arranged for her kids to play in a lounge before submitting her work to the chief editor.

As Natalie's design was great, the editors and singers were all satisfied with her work. They approved her work without any editing, and the submission procedure went by smoothly.

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Although her designs had been approved, Natalie remained in the chief editor's office for the actual production of the outfits and to discuss their collaboration further.

The chief editor then summoned all the tailors in charge of the outfits for a meeting with Natalie. After deciding on the type of fabric and cut, Natalie ended the meeting and went looking for her kids in the lounge.

"Mommy!" The kids were having snacks on the sofa and waved at Natalie when they saw her.

Natalie closed the door behind her and walked up to them as she said, "Sorry to keep you two waiting for so long!"

Connor shook his head. "It's okay, Mommy! We know you were busy."

Sharon followed suit and said, "Yeah! We know how busy you were, Mommy!"

Natalie couldn't help but feel touched by how obedient and understanding they were.

She was about to bring them home when Connor mentioned all of a sudden, "Daddy called earlier, Mommy!"

"What? Your daddy called?" Natalie was a little surprised.

Connor nodded. "Yeah! Daddy said he tried calling you but couldn't get through, so he called me instead. He wanted to know what you were doing."

"Ah, I see. Okay, I'll call him back right away!" Natalie gave him a pat on the head and whipped out her phone.

She tapped on one of the few missed calls from Shane and called him back.

The call got through very quickly, and Shane's deep voice was heard on the other end of the line. "You're done with your work?"

"Yeah, I had my phone on silent because I was in a meeting with the chief editor and the others. I'm sorry about that, Darling," Natalie said apologetically.

Shane chuckled. "I figured you had it on silent when Connor told me you were working."

"Did you have something important to tell me, Darling?" Natalie asked. Shane pinched his brow and looked a little exhausted as he said, "Silas has found out something about the organization that the badge belongs to."

Natalie sat up straight upon hearing that, and her expression grew serious instantly. "He has? What organization is it?"

"It's both a federal and an international organization. Its members range from all sorts of talented people from various countries to extremely poor and vicious thugs. This organization is incredibly large and specializes in criminal activities like murder, arson, and drug trafficking. Long story short, it's a very chaotic and highly dangerous organization," Shane said in a stern voice.

Natalie gasped in shock. "I can't believe Sean joined such a terrifying organization!"

"That's not all. He's also one of the high-ranking members in the organization." Shane hit her with yet another shocking revelation.

"Higher-ranking members?" Natalie asked in confusion.

Shane nodded. "That's right. Those with badges are all high-ranking members."

Natalie swallowed nervously. "So that's why he was able to travel between countries! I didn't think he'd have such a powerful background."

What on earth has Sean done to become a high-ranking member of such an organization in just five years?

"You must be careful out there, especially now that you're overseas," Shane reminded her seriously.

Natalie nodded. "Yeah, I will."

"Good thing this organization is based in another country, so Sean has rather limited power over there. Otherwise, I would've canceled this international competition of yours and brought you back home."

"Please don't cancel it! This competition is really important to me! We might have to wait a few years before we get another one, and I don't want to quit halfway through! Don't worry, I'll keep myself and the kids safe," Natalie reassured him.

"I've arranged for some of my men to keep you safe over there. That way, I'll be able to rest a little easier," Shane said.

Natalie smiled. "Thanks, Darling!"

"By the way, what have you managed to find out about the package?" Shane asked all of a sudden.

The smile on Natalie's face vanished as she explained, "I asked the deliveryman about it. He said it was a Chanaean woman who gave it to him, so it has to be Jacqueline. In order to prevent this from happening again, I had Sal install more spy cameras in a 100-yard radius around the villa. We'll be alerted immediately if anyone suspicious shows up in the vicinity."

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"You did well!" Shane complimented her with a smile.

Feeling a little shy from his praise, Natalie played with her hair in response.

Shane wiped his hair that was still dripping wet. "I'll be having a business trip in a couple of days, so I'll be able to pay you guys a visit."

Natalie's eyes lit up with joy. "Great! When will you be coming?"

"I'm not sure of the exact date yet. It all depends on the schedule," Shane replied while tossing the towel aside.

Natalie nodded. "Okay, give me a call when you come over. Blow-dry your hair and get some rest now, Darling."

"All right."

Connor came over the moment Natalie got off the phone. "What did Daddy say, Mommy?"

"It's adult talk, so kids like you shouldn't be asking about it," Natalie said while giving him a gentle poke on the forehead.

The kids were sleeping due to jet lag when the package arrived, so they had no idea what happened.

Because they loved animals a lot, Natalie didn't plan on telling them about the package either.

After all, hearing about a dead cat in a package was sure to traumatize them greatly.

More importantly, she didn't want to worry them unnecessarily.

Connor pouted when he saw that Natalie refused to tell him. "Fine! Forget it, then!"

He then walked off to play with Sharon instead.

With a smile on her face, Natalie texted Stanley the information that Shane discovered about the organization.

Having gotten no response from him after two minutes, she figured he was probably busy and texted Joyce about it instead.

Joyce was the one who found the badge, and the information about the organization could clear the Rivers family's name, so she had the right to know about it too.

Joyce's response came fairly quickly but in the form of a phone call instead of a text message.

"Is this true, Nat?" Joyce sounded really agitated.

"Yes, it is. Stanley's parents were killed by the high-ranking members of the organization," Natalie replied with a nod.

Joyce tightened her grip on the phone as she said, "This is great! I'll tell Stanley about this right away!"

She was about to hang up the phone when Natalie said, "I've already told him about it, but he hasn't replied yet. I think he might be busy at the moment."

Having calmed down a little, Joyce said with reddened eyes, "Oh, I see... Nat, you have no idea how happy I am right now! I can finally prove to Stanley that my family is innocent!"

Natalie bit down on her lip. "Joyce, I don't think this alone is enough to prove anything."

Joyce's eyes went wide as she asked, "Not enough? You've already found out about the organization and that his parents were killed by their high-ranking members, right? That means my parents didn't do it! How is this not enough to prove our innocence?"

"Of course it isn't. Stanley's parents were killed by the high-ranking members, but Stanley could also accuse your parents of revealing their location to said high-ranking members," Natalie replied sternly.

Joyce fell silent instantly.

She's right. Even if we found out about the organization, it still doesn't prove my family's innocence...

"Damn it! Why did it have to turn out like this? We finally find a glimmer of hope after so long, only to be plunged back down to rock bottom. Why would God toy with us like this, Nat? Why?" Joyce said with a wry chuckle before breaking down in tears.

Natalie let out a pained sigh. "Don't give up just yet, Joyce. Finding out about the organization may not be enough to clear your family's name, but it's still huge progress. Once we find the high-ranking member responsible and have him confess how he found Stanley's parents, your family will be proven innocent!"

Joyce's eyes lit up with hope upon hearing that, only to turn gloomy moments later as she said, "It's not easy finding the killer, though. They wouldn't have evaded capture for over a decade if it was that easy. Besides, it's like you said. The organization is filled with all sorts of ruthless and dangerous criminals. How are we going to catch the culprit?"

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"Well..." It was Natalie's turn to go silent.

She's right. This organization has been operating globally for so many years without being stopped by Interpol, which goes to show just how powerful it is.

How are ordinary civilians like us going to stand up to the organization and catch the killer?

We might not even be able to catch Sean! Besides, I'm not about to let Shane take such a risk either! Thompson Group may be an international organization, but it's no match against such a powerful force of evil. While the lunatics in that organization might lose in a direct confrontation with Thompson Group, there's no way they'd fight fairly.

They're definitely going to pull dirty tricks and take us by surprise. You can stop them once or twice, but you can't stop them forever. I won't let Shane challenge these scumbags because I don't want him losing his life fighting against them. Besides, our goal is to catch Sean and the killer who murdered Stanley's parents, not to destroy this entire organization. As such, we will need to take our time and plan our moves carefully.

With that in mind, Natalie took a deep breath and said, "Be patient, Joyce. We'll find a way."

"What way could we possibly find?" Joyce asked with a wry chuckle.

Natalie narrowed her eyes. "I'm sure we'll figure something out. Sean is a part of that organization, so we might be able to work with Stanley and come up with a better plan."

Joyce's eyes lit up upon hearing that. "Work together?"

"That's right. Since our enemies are in that organization, working together is the best way to go about this," Natalie replied with a nod.

Joyce clenched her fists tightly. "Right, of course. So, when do we start our collaboration?"

"We'll have to take our time with this. You know how Shane dislikes Stanley, right? I'll have to resolve the conflict between them before they would even consider working together," Natalie replied.

Joyce gave it some thought and agreed with her statement. "How about this? You work things out with Mr. Shane, and I'll do the same with Stanley."

She was determined to change Stanley's mind even if he refused to see her.

"Sure!"

Natalie placed her phone in her handbag after hanging up.

A knock sounded on the lounge door, and Connor quickly ran over to open it.

An editor of the magazine company was standing there with a small box in his hands.

"Who are you looking for, mister?" Connor asked him politely in fluent Astorian.

Whoa, how is a child like him able to speak such fluent Astorian? The editor was a little surprised, but he quickly snapped out of it and asked with a smile, "Is Ms. Smith here?"

Natalie, who was fixing Sharon's braids in the lounge, got up and walked over upon hearing her name. "Yes, that would be me. What is it?"

"Well, I was just done with lunch when a woman approached me. She claimed to be your friend and said she had a present for you. Here, she asked me to bring this to you," the editor said while handing her the box.

The look on Natalie's face changed instantly as she recalled the package she received yesterday.

The deliveryman, too, had said a woman who claimed to be her friend had him deliver a present to her, but it turned out to be a dead cat.

Given how similar the current scenario was to the one from yesterday, the contents of the box were probably nothing pleasant.

"Mommy?" Connor tilted his head in confusion when he saw Natalie staring at the box like it was her mortal enemy.

That snapped Natalie out of her daze, and she said with a forced smile, "I'm fine."

She then turned toward the editor and asked, "Did you get a clear view of how the woman looked like?"

"No. She was all covered up with thick clothing, including her face. However, I did notice that she had black hair and dark pupils. She wasn't very fluent in Astorian either. I think she's a Chanaean like you," the editor replied after giving it some thought.

It matches the deliveryman's description from yesterday! Jacqueline is at it again! I kept the villa secure to keep her packages out, but I couldn't do much to stop her outside of the villa. I can't believe she followed me and sent me another one of those disgusting packages again!

Natalie clenched her fists tightly at the thought of that. Feel the

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"Ms. Smith, do you want this or not?" The editor was getting a little impatient as Natalie had yet to take the box from him.

"I'll take it!" Connor offered to take the box when he saw no response from her.

"Don't touch it!" Natalie shouted loudly when she saw him reaching for it.

Shocked by her sudden outburst, Connor looked up at Natalie in confusion. "Mommy?"

Sharon also didn't understand why Natalie yelled at Connor when he was just helping her receive the package.

Natalie knew she had hurt her kids by lashing out like that and felt guilty about it, but she didn't apologize to them immediately.

Instead, she reached out to take the box from the editor and said, "Thanks."

"Don't mention it," the editor said with a wave before walking off.

Natalie then closed the door and stared at the box in her hands.

It was about the size of her palm, and she could hear something bumping around inside when she gave it a little shake.

Natalie couldn't tell what was inside the box, but she wasn't planning on opening it.

The package from yesterday had a dead cat inside, so this must have something nasty in it as well! It's probably a dead rat or something!

Not wanting to scare her kids, Natalie placed the box into her handbag before kneeling down beside her kids. "I'm sorry for yelling earlier. I didn't mean to do that, but you two really shouldn't be taking this box."

"Why not?" Sharon asked in confusion.

Connor kept quiet and simply stared at Natalie's handbag, seemingly in deep thought.

Natalie let out a sigh. "Because whatever is inside it isn't appropriate for children. Someone is pulling a nasty prank on us."

"How do you know that, Mommy?" Connor asked.

I was planning on keeping the incident from yesterday a secret, but it looks like I'll have to tell them about it now.

With that in mind, Natalie gave him a pat on the head as she said, "Because I've already received one yesterday."

Oh, so that's why.

Having understood what was going on, Connor stopped feeling upset about it.

"What was in the package yesterday, Mommy?" he asked.

Not wanting to say it out loud, Natalie took him by the hand and traced the words on his palm.

Connor's eyes went wide instantly, and his face turned pale from shock when he realized what it was.

Natalie gave him a comforting hug and said, "I wasn't planning on telling you because I didn't want to scare you. However, I have no choice but to do so now that I've received another one of those packages in front of you two today."

Connor leaned against her shoulder with anger written all over his little face. "Who's doing this to us, Mommy?"

Natalie gave him a little pat on the back. "It's Jacqueline."

Connor clenched his fists tightly and was trembling all over when he heard that.

"Her!" His eyes were filled with hatred, and he was gritting his teeth as he spat those words out.

Even Sharon began to cry when she heard that name as she recalled the unforgettable trauma Jacqueline had caused her.

"Mommy..." she cried in fear and threw herself into Natalie's arms.

Knowing how much she feared Jacqueline, Natalie hugged her tightly and comforted her, "Don't be scared, Sharon. Mommy's here to protect you!"

"Okay!" Sharon nodded in her embrace.

Seeing Sharon in tears gave Connor a flashback of Jacqueline raising her high into the air before slamming her hard against the ground.

Had we not managed to rescue Sharon in time, she could have died right then and there! I'll never let this grudge go for the rest of my life!

Natalie noticed the changes in Connor's expression and the look in his eyes.

She understood his hatred for Jacqueline, but she didn't want him to be holding a huge grudge like this at such a young age.

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Natalie noticed the changes in Connor's expression and the look in his eyes.

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She believed that grudges between adults should be resolved between adults, and that their children should not get involved.

However, she also knew how mature Connor was for his age, so having him forget it and go back to being a happy five-year-old was highly unlikely.

In the end, Natalie decided she wouldn't talk Connor out of it as long as he didn't let his hatred go to his head.

"What happened? Why are Connor and Sharon's eyes all red? Have they been crying?" The door to the lounge was opened once again, and Sally saw the three of them hugging each other before she even entered the room.

Natalie let go of her kids and flashed her a smile as she stood up. "You're done with the photo shoot?"

"Yeah, I came by when I heard that you three were still here. What happened just now?" Sally asked while pointing at the kids.

Instead of answering her question, Natalie simply bit down on her lip and retrieved the box from her handbag.

Sally's eyelids twitched a little when she saw the box. "W-What is that?"

"The incident from yesterday has repeated itself," Natalie replied.

Sally gasped. "That person sent it to you all the way here?"

Natalie narrowed her eyes. "Yeah, and I'm suspecting that I'll receive another one when I go for the competition tomorrow."

"We can worry about that tomorrow. However... how do you plan on handling this one?" Sally asked while pointing at the box in her hand.

Natalie pursed her lips. "I'll just throw it away."

"Aren't you going to see what's inside?" Sally asked.

Natalie's expression grew cold. "No, that won't be necessary. Given the contents of the package yesterday, it's obvious that this one won't be anything pleasant. Might as well spare ourselves the shock."

"You're right, but I still feel like seeing what's inside!" Sally said with a giggle.

Natalie arched an eyebrow at her. "Aren't you afraid?"

Sally shrugged. "I'm all right with it, I guess. Humans are just strange like this, you know? The more we fear something, the more we want to find out about it."

Natalie handed her the box. "Then you can have a look inside and tell me what you see."

"Okay!" Sally nodded as she took the box from her.

Seeing as Sally was about to open it on the spot, Natalie quickly stopped her and said, "Wait, the kids are still here. You can open it after we leave."

"Yeah, you're right." Sally stopped what she was doing.

"Come out when you're done looking. We'll be waiting for you in the car," Natalie said as she held her kids by the hands and brought them out of the lounge.

They waited in the car for about half an hour before seeing Sally emerge with a look of extreme disgust on her face.

Natalie narrowed her eyes as she asked, "What's wrong? Was it something really scary?"

"No, not really. In fact, it was actually a lot better than the one from yesterday," Sally replied while closing the car door.

"What was inside the box?" Natalie asked.

Sally kept quiet and simply stared at the kids in response.

Realizing what she meant, Natalie quickly covered Sharon's ears.

She didn't ask Connor to cover his ears as she figured he could handle it after knowing about the dead cat.

The events from earlier made her realize that Connor was a lot better at coping with stress than she had expected.

Sally understood that as well and held nothing back when she saw that Connor didn't cover his ears. "It was a box of live cockroaches. They flew out of the box the moment I opened it and were flying all over the place. Some of them even climbed onto my face. It was so disgusting that I nearly puked my guts out."

She shuddered a little after saying that and had disgust written all over her face.

Natalie felt sick in the stomach just by visualizing what happened, but she was more concerned about Connor and quickly checked to see if he was okay.

Apart from having a tight frown on his face, Connor was a lot calmer than both of them combined, much to her surprise.

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Natalie took a deep breath to regain her composure. "What happened after that? How did you get rid of the cockroaches?"

Sally retrieved a cold bottle of water from the portable refrigerator and chugged down half of it to help calm herself down. Then, she replied, "I screamed when the cockroaches came flying out of the box, so a staff member came over to check on things. He got mad when he saw the cockroaches in the lounge and insisted on having me catch them all before letting me out of there."

"So that's what took you so long..." Natalie nodded as she understood what happened.

"I don't ever want to see another cockroach for the rest of my life. I'll crush every single one I come across!" Sally massaged her forehead.

Natalie held her hand and said apologetically, "Sorry for causing you so much trouble."

Sally flashed her a smile in response. "Why are you apologizing? It's not your fault! I was the one who insisted on seeing what was inside, so I have only my curiosity to blame."

"Regardless, those packages were meant for me, and you've been scared twice in my stead. I *am* responsible for it somehow," Natalie answered with a sigh.

Sally gave her a pat on the shoulder. "Now, now, don't beat yourself up about it. Let's head back, shall we?"

"Okay..." Natalie mumbled.

She texted Shane about the second package the moment they got back, and he gave her a call later that night.

"Based on what happened today, it's highly likely that Jacqueline will send you another package at the venue for the competition tomorrow. Make sure you don't accept it," Shane said.

"Yeah, that's what I was planning on doing as well. Still, I don't understand her purpose for doing this. First, it was the dead cat, and now a box of cockroaches... Although they're both nasty and disgusting, all they do is scare the recipient. They're not even capable of causing any bodily harm. This doesn't seem like something Jacqueline would do, and I'm even starting to question if someone else is pulling these pranks on me," Natalie replied while leaning against the bed.

Jacqueline's methods usually posed a threat to either her life or her career, but both of those packages came off as sick pranks at best. That was why Natalie suspected that someone else was behind it.

But if Jacqueline isn't the one doing this, then who else could it be?

"Maybe this is just a prelude, and she might have something far worse coming your way," Shane guessed.

Natalie nodded. "Yeah, we can only go with this theory for now."

"You need to be extra careful. I've informed the bodyguards to stay close to you and the kids. I know you don't like this sort of arrangement, but please bear with it for the time being. Do it for yourself and the kids," Shane said sternly.

Although the bodyguards could keep them protected while maintaining their distance, Shane feared they wouldn't be able to respond in time in the event of an emergency.

As such, he felt safer with them staying close to her and the kids.

Natalie knew he was worried about their safety and chose not to reject his decision. "Got it."

Shane nodded in satisfaction when he saw no resistance from her. "Very well, then. I'll be leaving for my business trip tomorrow, so I should be able to visit you in about two days."

"Great! Connor and Sharon are going to be so happy when they hear this!" Natalie said with a smile.

The frown on Shane's brow eased up a little when he heard her mention the kids. "Where are they?"

"They're already asleep," Natalie replied. CLICK HERE TO JOIN OUR TELEGRAM CHANNEL FOR FAST UPDATES https://t.me/NovelsFuns

There was a trace of disappointment in Shane's eyes when he heard that. "Is that so?"

Natalie chuckled when she noticed his reaction. "Do you want me to wake them up so you can have a little chat with them?"

"No, let them sleep. I'll just talk to them when I see them in two days," Shane replied.

Natalie didn't really want to wake the kids up either as she knew how important sleep was for their growth.

Since he had declined her offer, she kept him company and chatted with him instead.

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They continued chatting late into the night and only hung up when Natalie began yawning sleepily.

The next day, Natalie and Sally became quite the center of attention when they showed up at the clubhouse with the kids and a group of bodyguards.

Sally walked with her head held high and enjoyed the looks of shock and envy from the crowd.

Amused by her behavior, Natalie decided to not stop her and just let her be.

She then brought her kids into the lounge and told them, "Connor, Sharon, I want you two to stay here. Don't go anywhere else, okay? I'll come find you once the competition is over."

"Okay!" Both of them nodded in unison.

"Very good!" Natalie gave them each a kiss on the forehead. She then turned toward Connor and said, "Connor, I want you to either give me a call or ask the bodyguards for help if anything happens. Do not try to handle it by yourself. You know how crazy things have been lately. Mommy will be really sad if anything bad were to happen to you two."

Connor placed his hand on her cheek and said seriously, "I will, Mommy. Don't worry, I won't do anything rash. I know what I need to do."

The previous incident with Sharon had taught him that his smarts would only get him so far when going against an adult as a child.

He knew that Jacqueline and Sean were secretly watching them, so he wasn't about to try anything crazy or go wandering around with Sharon.

"All right, I'll get going now," Natalie said as she stood up.

"Bye, Mommy!" The kids waved at her.

Natalie nodded at them with a smile before turning around and walking out of the lounge.

She then closed the door behind her and instructed two of the bodyguards outside with a stern expression, "I'm leaving my kids under your care, so I'll hold you two responsible if anything happens to them."

The bodyguards straightened their posture as they replied, "Don't worry, Madam! We'll keep the children safe!"

"All right. Mr. Shane and I will reward you nicely if you do your jobs well!" Natalie said with a satisfied smile.

Threats alone aren't enough to ensure loyalty in people. You need to also tempt them with some monetary rewards. It's pretty much the same as the carrot and stick approach.

As expected, the two bodyguards' eyes lit up with joy upon hearing that. "Understood, Madam!"

Natalie then nodded and walked off.

Apart from the two stationed outside the lounge, the other bodyguards followed Natalie closely as more manpower was required to keep her safe in such a crowded area.

The difficulty level gradually increased as more participants were being eliminated from the competition, and Natalie could hear some of the designers sighing in despair as they struggled to keep up.

I feel kind of bad for them, but I'm not about to help them out. Everyone wants to succeed in life, and reality is simply harsh like that. Besides, this is an elimination tournament, not an exhibition match.

With that in mind, Natalie took a deep breath and suppressed her feelings of pity as she immersed herself in the competition.

During the break at noon, she submitted her design and was about to have lunch in the lounge with Sally when a staff member called out to them.

When they saw the box in the staff member's hands, the two showed no signs of surprise and simply gave each other a knowing look in response.

Here it comes!

They had expected the package to be delivered to the clubhouse, so seeing the staff member handing them a box confirmed their suspicions.

"Your friend had me deliver this present to you, Ms. Smith," the staff member said.

"Thanks!" Natalie received it with a smile.

"You're welcome." The staff member then waved at her before walking off.

Sally waited until the staff member had gone far before snatching the box from Natalie. "Damn it! I can't believe she actually delivered it here!"

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She held it up to her ear and gave it a little shake to hear what was inside, but the sound was so dull that she couldn't tell what it was.

Eventually, Sally had no choice but to throw it into the nearest trash can. "Let's not open the box this time, Nat. It could be another box of cockroaches again, and it won't be easy catching them in a place this huge."

"Yeah, let's go!" Natalie replied, feeling relieved that Sally decided to throw it away as she had intended to do the same.

She had gotten so used to receiving unpleasant surprises that she didn't even react that strongly to people bringing her packages anymore.

The two of them continued making their way toward the lounge, and the two bodyguards outside opened the door for them. "After you, Madam."

Natalie nodded at them in response and brought Sally into the lounge with her.

The kids were watching television inside and came running over the moment they saw them enter. "Are you finished with the competition, Mommy?"

"Not yet. I still have to continue competing in the afternoon," Natalie replied as she bent down to hug them.

As the kids were turning five soon, she found it a little painful when they bumped into her thighs.

Had they been a year older, she wouldn't even dare let them throw themselves at her like that.

"The bodyguards brought us our lunch, Nat!" Sally said excitedly while pointing at the food on the table.

Ever since he knew that Jacqueline was there, Shane told Natalie to not eat at the clubhouse cafeteria as nobody knew if she had bribed the staff there.

To play it safe, he had the bodyguards purchase their meals from different restaurants every day and deliver them to the clubhouse instead.

That way, he could prevent Sean and Jacqueline from sabotaging their food as they wouldn't know which restaurant they were buying from.

"Yeah, I see it. Come on, let's all gather around for lunch!" Natalie said with a smile while holding both her kids by the hand.

A knock was heard on the lounge door halfway through their meal.

Natalie placed her cutlery down and shouted, "Come in!"

The bodyguards then opened the door and entered the lounge.

"Madam, one of the staff members came by and said your friend sent you this present," the bodyguard said as he held up a box in front of them.

Natalie frowned when she saw the box.

Sally, on the other hand, slammed her fist hard on the table and shouted angrily, "What the hell? Another one? She usually only sends one per day, but now she's sending two?"

The box was larger than the one from before, which meant it was a new one.

"Did Jacqueline send us something again, Mommy?" Connor narrowed his eyes.

"Yeah," Natalie replied.

Connor's expression grew cold upon hearing that.

Natalie then ordered the bodyguard, "Take it outside and examine the contents. Do not accept any more packages from anyone."

"Yes, Madam!" The bodyguard nodded and went outside with the box.

Natalie then shifted her gaze back toward the table and said with a forced smile, "Come on, let's continue eating."

Sally pouted. "I'm so mad that I don't even feel like eating anymore!"

Natalie simply glanced at her and the kids before continuing her meal in silence.

Honestly, I'm just as mad as she is. We need to catch Jacqueline, or these packages will just keep coming. Even if the bodyguards try their best to stop her, she'll find a way to get past them eventually.

Natalie rubbed her forehead and let out a sigh at the thought of that.

After lunch, she reminded the kids once more to not wander off before leaving the lounge with Sally.

The bodyguards were waiting for them outside the door, and the one who brought her the box earlier stepped forward upon seeing them. "I've examined the contents of the box, Madam."

"What was inside?" Natalie asked.

The bodyguard's face turned red, and he found it really hard to answer her question.

Natalie pursed her lips and questioned him again, "Go on, tell me! What was inside that box?"

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"They were erotic photos of you and Mr. Thompson... I mean, edited photos! They made it look like you were sleeping with other men, and Mr. Thompson with other women..." the bodyguard replied awkwardly.

Being professional bodyguards, they were easily able to tell if the photographs were edited, especially since the skin tones for the faces didn't match the ones on the bodies.

"What the f*ck? How shameless can she get, editing photos like that?" Sally began cursing angrily before Natalie could even respond.

"Where are the photos?" Natalie asked with a frown.

"I've already burned them all," the bodyguard replied immediately.

Natalie nodded in satisfaction. "Good to know."

Although those photos were fake, it would still cause me a lot of trouble if they were leaked to the public. People would surely jump at the opportunity to start rumors, and all the idiots would just blindly believe them! Such cases happen all the time in the entertainment industry.

"I've also informed Mr. Thompson of this incident," the bodyguard added.

"How did he respond?" Natalie asked.

"He was really angry. He wants us to increase our security levels and catch Jacqueline the next time she delivers these packages," the bodyguard replied.

Natalie frowned. "It won't be easy catching her, especially with Sean backing her up."

"Mr. Thompson is aware of that. That's why he wants you all to stay away from the villa for the next couple of days," the bodyguard said.

"Where will we be staying then?" Sally asked in confusion.

"Right here in the clubhouse. The event organizers have arranged for you all to stay in a guest room and will provide you with the details later. As long as you all remain in the clubhouse, Jacqueline will only be able to deliver the packages to you through the staff members. We will then inform all the staff members to nab Jacqueline the moment she approaches any one of them with a package," the bodyguard explained.

Sally's eyes lit up after hearing that. "This sounds like a good idea, Nat!"

Natalie nodded in agreement. "It does. By staying here, we'll be able to work together with the staff members and catch Jacqueline."

"We're going with this plan then!" Sally said.

Natalie turned toward the bodyguard and said, "Very well. Have the organizer summon all the staff members for a meeting."

"Understood," the bodyguard replied.

With that, Natalie and Sally headed off for the competition.

Due to the higher levels of difficulty, the winners would only be announced after two to three days.

All the participants would make their outfits the next day and present it on the catwalk the day after.

As most of them had only completed their designs that day, they had zero progress on creating their outfits just yet.

Natalie too, had only selected the fabrics she wanted.

After the competition was over for the day, she headed over to the guest room with Sally and the kids.

The organizers had prepared two rooms for them, so Natalie picked the bigger one for her and the kids.

It was their first time staying in a place like this, so it was a refreshing experience for them all. The clubhouse kept a collection of many famous designs and haute couture garments, but Natalie had been so busy with the competition that she never had time to take a look at them. As such, staying over at the clubhouse gave her the perfect opportunity to do so.

The next day, Natalie summoned the bodyguards before the competition and asked, "Has any of the clubhouse's staff members received any packages since last night?"

One of the bodyguards shook his head. "No."

"Maybe she hasn't delivered the one for today," Sally guessed.

"Yeah, I think so," Natalie said with a nod.

She then turned toward the bodyguards and gave the order, "Keep your eyes peeled, and nab her if she shows up."

"Yes, Madam!" the bodyguards replied in unison.

"Come on, let's get going," Natalie told Sally.