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She began to wallow in self-pity upon picturing herself living with him. Truth be told, she had amazing cooking skills. Everything she cooked would burst with flavors.

Back then, Jeremy used to say that she was most suited to be a housewife and that her cooking was even better than his mother's.

At the Jones residence, Skylar hadn't even touched the cutlery. Starving since morning, her stomach was growling loudly, and she barely had the strength to speak. She was also feeling sluggish from the lack of carbs.

"Are you hungry? I'm cooking some noodles, so I'll cook a bowl for you too," she said to Tobias.

Tobias lowered his gaze and smirked. "I don't eat junk food like instant noodles."

Skylar replied coldly, "What a picky eater. When I was young, I didn't even get the chance to eat instant noodles. Grandma was frugal and would often cook plain noodles. On Children's Day, she'd buy me some braised beef instant noodles. At that time, I'd thought this was the best food in the world. Even my dream then was to eat instant noodles every day when I grow up."

Tobias folded his arms and raised his brows at her. "Are you telling me this to get my sympathy?"

Skylar was rendered speechless. That never even crossed my mind. I just said it on a whim. He is such a conversation killer.

Arching her lips into a smile, she played along with Tobias. "You're right, Mr. Ford. After listening to such a tragic story, don't you think I'm really pitiful? That I have a sad life? I've suffered too much, but at least you're here now to alleviate some of my pain."

Tobias gently pinched Skylar's cheeks that were flushed with embarrassment. "Not at all. No one knows what's in store for them upon coming into this world. Everyone out there has

their own troubles, so why should they try and relate to yours? The key is in your hands. I'm only giving you the support. Everything else is up to you."

Enlightened by Tobias' words, Skylar raised her eyes to study this wise man.

She couldn't deny that putting aside his wild taste in bed, he could indeed be considered a life mentor.

She pursed her lips and murmured, "I won't talk about these things anymore. You're right. There are people who have it much worse compared to me."

"Smart girl. You can still talk to me about it but forget about telling other people. Keep your past hidden from prying eyes. Not many people can empathize, so it's better to maintain an air of secrecy."

Skylar nodded in understanding. No one besides Tobias had ever given her such sincere and earnest advice.

She took out some chilies and onions from the refrigerator, then found some chicken in the freezer.

"Do you eat Chicken Maryland?" she asked.

Tobias shook his head. "Too oily."

"What about grilled chicken?" Skylar asked.

"How is that different from Chicken Maryland?"

Exasperated, Skylar let out a sigh. The man was really hard to please, so she eventually decided to cook instant noodles. He can take it or leave it.

She cooked a big pot of noodles and transferred them into a glass casserole, filling every corner of the villa with its aroma.

This time, she prepared two sets of cutlery but didn't call Tobias over to eat.

As Tobias watched Skylar slurping on the noodles while looking at her phone, he noticed the sheen of sweat on her forehead.

He picked up his cutlery, then pulled out the chair beside her and gracefully lowered himself into it.

Skylar pushed the casserole toward him. "It's good. You should try some. I put bacon, crab sticks, and fish balls in it."

Tobias forked up some of the noodles and ate them slowly.

Skylar gradually fell into a trance as she watched him, amazed at how he could look so elegant even when eating instant noodles.

On the other hand, she ate food as though it was her first meal in a hundred years.

"Is it good?" Skylar looked at him expectantly.

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Tobias rarely talked while eating; it was a habit ingrained into him.

Silence blanketed the living room.

Skylar thought she had spoken too softly, so she repeated, "Do my instant noodles taste good?"

Tobias took his time savoring the noodles before answering, "Not bad, but it's a little salty."

Skylar took another big mouthful of noodles. It looks like we don't have similar taste preferences.

As soon as Skylar came out of the shower, her waist was grabbed by a pair of strong hands.

She knew very well what was about to happen. As Tobias' hands roamed all over her body, she reminded him, "I don't want to take the pills anymore. They're not good for my body."

Some advised against taking morning-after pills more than three times per year, but she had already lost count of the times she took those pills since being together with Tobias.

Tobias had always been inconsiderate in this regard.

Now that she brought it up, he reassured her, "I understand. I'll control myself, but I don't like wearing condoms. It's uncomfortable."

She was then pressed down by his sturdy body with her lips sealed tightly. Tobias always dominated her in bed, and there was no room for resistance.

Skylar cooperated with his movements awkwardly. All of a sudden, the sound of a phone ringing pierced through the air, causing her heart to almost fly out of her throat.

She frantically pushed against his chiseled pecs. "Your phone is... Mm... Your phone is ringing. Don't be bothered with me..."

Due to Tobias' teasing, she couldn't even form a proper string of words. Soon, his kisses drifted below her waistline.

A crease formed between Tobias' brows as he grabbed Skylar's wrists and pinned them above her head. "Let it ring. I have more pressing matters at hand."

There was a combination of desire and lust swirling in his dark eyes as his breathing turned heavy and a thin layer of sweat formed on his forehead.

To Skylar's relief, their lovemaking session finally came to an end. This man was a sex-machine. Skylar had told him multiple times that she couldn't go on any longer, but that only made him wilder. She was completely at the mercy of his huge appetite for sex.

In a bad mood, she turned her back to Tobias and curled up beneath the blanket without bothering to put on her clothes.

Faced with her smooth and fair back, Tobias hugged her from behind as both of their breathing gradually returned to normal.

"Are you mad at me? I made sure not to release inside so that you won't have to take the pills anymore," Tobias whispered hoarsely with his lips pressed against the back of her neck.

Despite that, Skylar still wasn't in the mood to talk to him. He may not seem like it, but he had more than a few ways to torture her. She felt like she was going to die in Tobias' bed sooner or later. When that happened, her name would probably go down in history and rule the headlines of every media outlet.

"Don't you know that women should be treated with care and respect, Mr. Ford? You have terrible sex etiquette, always biting more than you kiss." Skylar pulled the blanket over her head, trying to isolate herself.

Being accused by a woman of having bad sex etiquette was a huge blow to a man's dignity. As if to punish her, Tobias gently bit down on her shoulder.

Then, he let go of her waist. "You don't even realize how lucky you are. Here I am, doing my very best to please you and yet you're not satisfied. When you're older, you'll understand just how lucky you are!"

Indeed, Skylar didn't understand. Even when she was half-dead from being tormented by him, he still had the audacity to claim that he was pleasing her. All he cares about is his own pleasure.

At that thought, she ignored Tobias and squeezed her eyes shut. Completely drained of strength, she drifted off to sleep within a few minutes.

It was only after Skylar didn't react for a long time that Tobias realized she was asleep.

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Tobias wasn't as lucky as her when it came to falling asleep. He pulled down the blanket covering Skylar's head and gently stroked her delicate cheek. She resembled a sleeping kitten as she murmured in her sleep, "Why did all of you leave me? What have I done wrong?"

She was dreaming that everyone had abandoned her.

Gazing at the moonlight beyond the windows, Tobias remained wide awake. He lay on his side and supported his head as he quietly watched Skylar. It was a peaceful feeling and how he wished he could freeze this moment.

The next day, Skylar opened her eyes and felt the space beside her only to find it empty, without a trace of warmth left. Tobias is gone again.

She tottered out of the bathroom. Every time Tobias had his way with her, she wouldn't be able to normally walk the next day.

The sun was shining brightly this morning with its rays spilling in through the windows, enveloping the entire house in a warm glow.

When Tobias noticed Skylar still wearing a bathrobe, he quirked a brow at her. "Are you seducing me this early in the morning? Was my performance yesterday not to your satisfaction?"

Skylar hastily tightened the belt of her bathrobe and changed the subject. "Why are you up so early?"

In answer to her question, Tobias served the breakfast he had prepared; fried eggs and sandwiches. Skylar noticed that the fried eggs were out of shape and slightly burnt.

She picked up a fork and took a bite out of the fried egg. A bitter taste instantly filled her mouth.

"Is it good?"

Skylar nodded. "Pretty good."

Tobias sighed softly. "I don't really know how to cook. It's probably quite bad, right?"

Skylar put down her fork, slightly annoyed. Why did he even ask me when he knows that it tastes horrible?

He poured a glass of milk for Skylar, but she pushed it away. "I don't drink milk."

Tobias gave her a sidelong glance. "Drink it. You're no different from an underdeveloped child. Don't you think you should focus on supplementing yourself? Do you wanna die from malnutrition?"

He was obviously concerned about her, but he phrased it in such an awkward way.

With a reluctant expression, Skylar picked up the glass and chugged the whole thing.

After that, she propped her cheeks on both hands. "Can I ask you a question, Tobias?"

In the midst of clearing the table, Tobias halted his movements and looked at her.

"What's going on with you and your fiancée? Am I the third party now? I heard that she's still living in your house. Everything is so complicated. What should I do?"

Tobias replied in a clipped tone, "I already told you that I wouldn't marry her, but I need time to convince my mom. Are you asking me this because you can't wait to marry me?"

Although Tobias' answer was ambiguous, Skylar had a strong hunch that he would compromise with his family and marry Tanya in the end.

After all, he and Tanya were a match made in heaven to everyone else.

With her chin resting on her hand, she smiled faintly. "I'm taking the train to N Province tomorrow. Filming will take at least three months. Are you going to stay here the whole time?"

Tobias did not answer. What's the point of staying here when she's not around?

After breakfast, he sent Skylar back to university to pack up for her trip tomorrow.

After Tobias checked his schedule using his phone, he ordered, "Come down earlier tomorrow. I'll come to pick you up. By the way, why aren't you traveling by plane?"

Skylar replied wryly, "No one booked the tickets for me. Besides, taking the train is cheaper. You know, I'm starting to think the director has forgotten about me."

Skylar's thrifty personality made Tobias feel slightly exasperated. He clearly gave her a black card, but it seemed like she was treating it more like a debit card.

He didn't want Skylar to be so courteous with him.

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"Take care of yourself when you get there, and remember, don't agree to sign any contract for the time being."

With that said, he tipped her chin and pressed his lips against hers.

As he deepened the kiss, Skylar felt slightly breathless, and the air around them seemed to sizzle with electricity.

At least half an hour had passed when they finally pulled apart from each other.

After that, Tobias returned to being cold and domineering.

As Skylar bid him goodbye, she felt slightly reluctant to part with him. Unwittingly, she had begun to crave his companionship.

Early the next morning, Skylar dragged her LV suitcase to the train station alone.

Standing among the crowd at the train station, she occasionally glanced at the signboard of W Province station, her youthful and delicate features attracting a lot of attention.

"What a coincidence. You're also leaving today?" A voice Skylar would forever recognize reached her ears.

Turning around, she saw Jeremy in designer clothes with his hair parted to the side and a pair of shades resting on his nose bridge.

"Are you stalking me?" Skylar cast Jeremy a displeased look.

Jeremy shrugged and stuffed one hand into his pocket. "Don't be so paranoid. I don't have time to stalk you. Didn't you know that Director Daryl Williams personally picked me for the supporting role? The whole university knows about it."

Skylar didn't hear anything about Jeremy joining the cast.

However, she had read the original novel before and indeed, Jeremy fit the image of the second male lead. She had to admit that Daryl really did have an eye for casting.

Despite that, she didn't think she was suited to be the female lead.

"Why are you still taking the train instead of flying there when you're so loaded?" Skylar mocked him.

Her resentment toward him hadn't subsided yet. Tobias said he wasn't going to claim back the three million, so all that money was still Jeremy's to keep. Bitterness swelled in her every time she thought about this.

It was all because of her own stupidity back then. All she wanted was to save Jeremy's life, which was the reason why she failed to see the b*stard that he was.

Jeremy could tell that Skylar still didn't know he had been forced to return all the money. But he didn't dare to tell her for fear that she would confront Tobias and land him in hot soup.

His expression turned unsightly as he refuted, "I could say the same about you. Aren't you with Tobias? Why are you taking the train to N Province instead of a first-class flight?"

Skylar rolled her eyes at Jeremy. "This is none of your business."

When the train arrived at the station, Skylar dragged her suitcase and walked as quickly as her legs could carry her, wanting to keep a distance from Jeremy. Alas, she realized that she and Jeremy were sharing the same bunk only after boarding the train.

Jeremy was delighted though. After stowing away his luggage, he wore a wistful look on his face and sighed. "I still remember that you wanted to travel with me. You also said that we should visit the beach if we had money. Do you think this counts as us traveling together?"

Ignoring his words, Skylar put on her earphones to block out his voice. Mentioning their past was the greatest insult to her. A protective shell had long since formed over her heart. As a

result of that incident, she knew she shouldn't invest all her time and effort into a relationship because the more she loved, the easier she could get hurt.

Being with Tobias required her to constantly keep her guard up and be prepared to get kicked to the curb at any time. Sometimes, she couldn't help but wonder if long-term relationships even existed in this world. The number of divorce cases recorded in the Civil Affairs Bureau was enough of an answer.

Jeremy offered her a peanut butter sandwich and said, "This is for you. You probably haven't eaten yet since you came here so early."

As Skylar took the sandwich, she found it ludicrous. She was allergic to peanut butter, but Jeremy didn't seem to know that even after being with her for so long. However, she could remember all of his preferences.

At the moment, Jeremy was squinting at the glaring hickey on Skylar's neck, his expression turning ugly. "Why did you turn me down back then? And now you've suddenly become so wanton?"

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Skylar could only see Jeremy's mouth moving. Still not satisfied, she adjusted her music volume to its maximum.

The two of them ignored each other for more than ten hours on the train. The sky had turned dark outside the windows, and the train coach was filled with varying kinds of aroma. The man sitting across the aisle was slurping on some instant noodles. Not far away, someone was drinking and talking so loudly that the other passengers found it hard to sleep.

Skylar took out her phone to check the time. It was already three in the morning. Since she boarded the train, she hadn't heard from Tobias. Yet, she could still feel the ghost of his kiss on her lips from yesterday.

Upon checking his WhatsApp status, she found that he was online, which meant that he simply did not want to contact her. Moreover, he even had time to change his profile picture but didn't ask her about her journey.

Instantly, she felt a pang of disappointment, like a girl in love for the first time, eagerly waiting for her boyfriend to contact her. He was constantly on her mind even when she was asleep, and every time she opened her eyes, she hoped to see a message from him.

Skylar zoomed in on Tobias' new profile picture. His previous one only had a blank background, but now, it was replaced by a landscape photo. No matter how much Skylar studied it, she couldn't tell where it was taken.

Seeing that Tobias' WhatsApp status remained the same, she put her phone aside.

Just then, Jeremy finished a game of Mobile Legends. When he noticed the downcast look on her face as she stared at her phone, he came down from the top bunk and said with a sneer, "Whose text are you waiting for? Surely not Tobias'? Look at you, still so attached after getting dumped. Well, I don't blame you. After all, women love getting in over their heads. You really are pitiful though, thinking you could marry into a rich family. Well, stop dreaming. How could Tobias Ford ever fall for you?"

Every word Jeremy uttered was like a stab to Skylar's heart. Nevertheless, she kept her expression impassive and picked up her phone again, slanting her head as she tapped on her phone, seemingly chatting with someone.

When Jeremy was talking, she didn't lift her head once to look at him as she couldn't be bothered to converse with him.

Jeremy felt like he was punching cotton; nothing seemed to affect Skylar. He couldn't figure out who she was currently seeing, but he was certain that it wasn't Tobias.

Tobias was considered his creditor now. In order to look the part as an actor, he had taken a loan from Reliance Bank, a subsidiary of Ford Group, a few days ago and he blamed Skylar for this. If it weren't for her, he would never have needed to borrow money.

Abruptly, Skylar's phone screen lighted up with a WhatsApp notification. Her heart skipped a beat before pounding violently against her ribcage. Then, she hurriedly tapped it open.

Penelope: Skylar, are you asleep? I think I'm in love.

Seeing that it was a message from Penelope, a myriad of emotions washed over her. She regretted harboring hope because it only brought her disappointment in the end.

Skylar leaned on the lower bunk bed and languidly typed out a message: You tell me that once every half a month. Which hottie is it this time?

Penelope: It's a boy-next-door kind of guy. I'll introduce you when you're back. So what exactly is going on between you and that guy? Have you broken up? Don't be a homewrecker.

Skylar: I'm not a homewrecker.

A hint of sadness entered Skylar's clear eyes at being called a homewrecker by her best friend. Her choice of words was rather hurtful.

However, she didn't know how to untangle herself from this situation. It didn't help that Tobias had given her an ambiguous answer after she asked him. Just this afternoon, she saw from social media that Tanya had participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Luxe, a shopping mall under Ford Group.

Tanya was still Tobias' fiancée in name.