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Shane's perfect-sculptured face was tense. "I did not send you home."

"Hmm?" Natalie blinked her eyes in a daze. "You didn't send me home?"

Shane nodded in response.

Natalie's brows creased. "How could it not be you? You were the one at the bar just now."

"You've mistaken Stanley for me!" Shane looked right into her eyes.

The woman shook her head. "That's impossible. Even if I had too much to drink, I wouldn't have mistaken Stanley for you."

"You couldn't have been mistaken, but what if Stanley's hypnotized you?" Shane had his hands in his pockets and said with a frosty tone.

"Wh- what do you mean?" Natalie set her back straight. She had a hunch that what he was about to say would greatly challenge her beliefs and understanding.

The man looked straight into her eyes and parted his lips, "You've probably been hypnotized by Stanley back in the bar into thinking that he was me. I guess he was trying to catch you off guard and take you away."

Natalie shook her head in denial and managed a stiff smile. "That's impossible. He doesn't even know hypnosis. I mean, even if he does, why would he do that?"

Shane's face sank when he noticed that the woman was still siding Stanley. "It seems like you've never truly known this man. Otherwise, why would you have no idea that he knows hypnosis? As to why he's doing this, it's because that man has never given up on you."

Natalie's eyes widened in disbelief.

Shane massaged in between his brows and continued, "He knew that you would be more wary of him after he tried to kiss you back on the ship last time. He knows that you're in love with me, and impersonates me so that you won't..."

"Stop! That's impossible!" Natalie removed the sheets and jumped off the bed as she stopped at him.

Stanley is a good man. I mean, he did scare me when he kissed me last time... But otherwise, he has done nothing that makes me feel uneasy.

How could Stanley be that kind of man...

"I've made it so explicitly clear to you, and yet you refuse to believe me. Fine, then let me show you what kind of person he is!" Shane snorted and dragged her toward the foyer.

The man had been asking Silas to investigate Stanley's past, in hopes of exposing the despicable man's true self to Natalie.

However, the man was too enigmatic, and Silas had not been able to make much progress. Now that the devil has shown his cloven hooves, I can finally show her who he really is.

"Mr. Shane! Let me go! You're hurting me!" Natalie resisted the man, reluctant to trail behind him.

A voice in Natalie's head was telling her that once she had seen it, she wouldn't be able to see eye to eye with Stanley anymore.

Natalie bit down on her lip at the thought and tried to shrug off Shane's hands.

Just when she was about to do so, she noticed the wound on his left arm, and all colors drained from her face. "Mr. Shane, what's wrong with your arm?"

Shane acted as if he had not heard her.

After getting to the foyer, he let go of her hand and opened her intercom right in front of her. "Intercoms have security footage too. Incidentally, everything took place right here at the foyer so please take a good look yourself."

Shane retreated to one side after that.

Natalie's lips twitched as she looked at the playback on the screen.

It could be seen that after the door was open, Stanley steadied herself into the house, and pushed her against the shoe cabinet with his body. The man then stroked her hair and asked if she knew who he was.

Natalie could clearly hear that she had muttered the words 'Mr. Shane'.

"This... this..." Natalie stiffened at the sight of the video and turned around to look at Shane who was standing by her side.

I really have mistaken Stanley for him.

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Natalie noticed that her demeanor in the footage was off as well. She seemed blunt and robotic, not at all like her usual self. The only viable explanation would be that she was indeed hypnotized. There was no other way to explain the way she behaved.

She staggered a few steps back as if she had just suffered a blow. "Stanley... does know hypnosis!"

"Are you going to believe me now?" Shane asked as he pointed at the intercom.

Natalie's lips twitched, but there was no sound coming out of her lips.

Then, he touched the screen and continued, "He's not done yet. Look closer and believe me, you will see a whole new side of Stanley Quinn."

The woman clutched her hand tight and said nothing. However, her gaze was already transfixed on the screen of the intercom.

The playback continued.

At the sight of Stanley about to kiss her, her eyes widened as if it was about to pop out of her socket as her body stiffened in response.

Just when she thought the man was about to get his way, Shane appeared. The latter kicked down the door and stopped Stanley.

Natalie heaved a huge sigh of relief and finally relaxed herself.

"Luckily..." She mumbled softly, grateful for Shane's timely appearance.

Her relief did not go unnoticed. Noticing that the woman was beyond relieved at his own appearance, Shane's low spirit lightened up as his lips curled into a smile.

Meanwhile, Natalie had no idea that she had actually appeared the man with her little sigh to herself

She stared right at the screen. Shane and Stanley were arguing, and moments after the latter fished out a scalpel and launched at Shane.

The woman was dumbfounded by the turn of events.

She shrieked and covered her mouth to muffle her scream. Then, she noticed that Stanley had cut Shane as the latter managed to beat him to the ground.

So that's why his arm is injured!

Natalie then cast a glance at Shane's arm.

The man turned off the intercom. "Now do you know what kind of man Stanley Quinn is?"

Natalie gulped as she was too stunned to speak.

She was at a loss for words. The thing that happened that night was way beyond her comprehension. It was still befuddling to think that the grimaced and psychotic man was the amiable and gentle Stanley Quinn whom she had known.

I really do not know the man at all.

Dismayed, Natalie crouched down and held her knees to herself.

At the sight of her dejected manner, Shane's thin lips formed a hard line. "I've warned you since over a month ago to stay away from that man, and that he's not as simple as you think, but you've paid no heed to my words. That's why he's able to harm you time and again. I couldn't imagine if I haven't coincidentally dropped by tonight, you would have been..."

Natalie shuddered as she listened to him.

I would have been catering to Stanley's every whim if Shane hasn't showed up!

The woman felt an overwhelming urge to vomit, retching at the thought.

Shane's face tensed at the sight of her being all nauseous. He went over to the kitchen and fetched a cup of water. "Drink this."

Tears brimmed in the woman's bloodshot eyes.

She reached out to take the glass. Her heart warmed at the sight of the lemon slice in the glass and finished almost half a glass in one gulp.

Despite being hit by the pang of sourness of the lemon, Natalie thought it was effective in inhibiting her urge to vomit.

As expected, her stomach was feeling much better after the glass of water. The urge to vomit slowly eased as colors gradually returned to her face.

"Thank you, Mr. Shane." Natalie muttered her thanks weakly.

The man took over the glass of water and put it on the shoe cabinet. "How do you plan to deal with Stanley?"

Natalie stood up, ignoring his question and asked, "Where is he right now?"

"At the hospital. He is suffering from a serious mental breakdown. I've asked Jackson to quarantine him," replied Shane as he leaned against the shoe cabinet.

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"Mental breakdown?" Natalie was stumped as her eyes widened in bewilderment.

"Yes." Shane recounted Dr. Zeplin's diagnosis to Natalie.

Her jaw dropped after listening to him. "Stanley... is mentally unstable..."

He's too good at concealing his true self. I've never noticed that he's mentally deranged.

Does Joyce know about this?

Noticing that she was in a daze, Shane asked, "What are you thinking about?"

Natalie shook her head to snap out of her thoughts. She made her thoughts vocal and said, "I'm just thinking maybe Joyce is not aware of Stanley's condition."

"That is her problem. Have you thought about how to deal with Stanley?" Shane looked at her and asked again.

The woman bit down on her lip and appeared lost. "I don't know... I really don't. Mr. Shane, can we talk about this tomorrow? I'm tired."

Shane knew Natalie was merely avoiding to deal with the problem. Despite feeling irked, he could understand how she felt.

Stanley had been her friend for so many years after all, and judging by how she valued her friendships, it would not be hard to imagine that she would need to take more time to digest and eventually decide on the matter.

"Alright, then. Have a good rest." Shane nodded his head slightly and headed for the door.

It was the first time Natalie had not seen him to the door. Instead, she closed the door behind him immediately.

The woman leaned against the door and closed her eyes to recollect herself. After regaining her composure only did she head inside.

She made her way toward her twins' bedroom and turned the doorknob softly. At the sight of her twins fast asleep, she finally managed a smile.

She closed the door behind her and made her way to her own bedroom. The woman lay in the bed, staring right at the ceiling as she tried to process what had taken place that night.

Natalie had only fallen asleep near dawn. She was roused awake by Joyce's phone call at eight o'clock in the morning.

"Nat, do you know where had Stanley gone to? I went to his place to send him some medicine, but turned out that he wasn't at home. I called the hospital and they said that he did not go in for work either." Joyce sounded exasperated on the line.

Natalie wrapped herself with a blanket and leaned against the headboard. Her face turned grim as she asked, "Joyce, how did you get home yesterday?"

Noticing that Natalie did not answer her question, Joyce cocked her head to one side in confusion.

"The people at the bar sent me home. Why?"

Natalie lowered her eyes. "Then, did you know how I got back home yesterday?"

"How would I now? I was drunk out of my wits since I was the one who drunk the most," Joyce answered with a smile.

Natalie, on the other hand, had a stern face on as she breathed in deeply and shut her eyes. "Joyce, I was hypnotized by Stanley into thinking that he was Shane so that he could have his way with me."

"What?" Joyce jolted from the mat outside of Stanley's room. "That's impossible. Why would he..."

Natalie's lips twitched. "I'd like to think that he wouldn't do such a thing to me too. However, the intercom had recorded everything. Stanley really did that."

Joyce's hand clutched tightly on her cell phone, her voice turned shaky. "Then... did Stanley and you..."

Natalie shook her head in response, albeit Joyce wouldn't be able to see her. "Don't worry. He did not succeed. Mr. Shane saved me in time."

"Okay, that's good." Overjoyed, Joyce patted her chest in relief for both Natalie and herself.

Even though she knew Stanley had a crush on Natalie, she was earnestly hoping that nothing would happen between the two.

After all, she did not want them to have any strings attached for she had fallen in love with Stanley.

"Joyce." Natalie raised a brow and called her name.

"What's the matter, Nat?"

"Joyce, I realize that you're not at all surprised by me being hypnotized by Stanley, and you're only surprised that Stanley tried to force himself on me. Were you already aware that he knew hypnosis?" Natalie clutched her palms tight and questioned her friend.

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"I... I..." Joyce's iris constricted as her lips twitched.

Noticing that Joyce was stuttering, things became clear as day to Natalie. She sneered, "So you knew about this right from the start?"

"Sorry, Nat. I've known for a while that Stanley knew hypnosis, but I did not deliberately keep this from you because I've never expected for him to use it against you." Joyce lowered her head guiltily.

"Okay." Natalie breathed in deeply and tried to contain herself. "Do you know that he suffers from mental illness too?"

Joyce kept mum for two seconds before mumbling an affirmative response. "Yes. He had been diagnosed with mental illness back when he was still a teen, but it wasn't anything serious..."

"You're mistaken about that. His condition is very serious. For goodness' sake, he almost killed Mr. Shane yesterday!" Natalie clutched her sheets tight and interrupted Joyce with a poker face.

"What? Are you serious?" Joyce's voice raised an octave.

"It's true. Luckily Mr. Shane was great at defending himself. Otherwise, who knew what might have happened to him. Even so, he still suffered a minor injury. Then, Mr. Shane asked a psychiatrist to diagnose Stanley. The doctor said..."

"What did he say?" Joyce egged her on, anxious to listen to what Natalie had to say.

Natalie sighed aloud as she noticed her friend's overly anxious tone. "The doctor mentioned that Stanley had to undergo therapy immediately. Otherwise, he's going to go out of hand, and will become a threat to everyone else around him as he no longer would be able to behave rationally."

"Why... How did it become so serious?" Joyce covered her mouth in shock as tears rolled down her cheeks.

"That's the truth." Natalie lowered her eyes.

"Then, where is Stanley right now?" Joyce breathed in deeply as she tried to contain her emotions. "Nat, you do know where he is, right?"

"He's at the hospital. Dr. Baker has put him under quarantine," Natalie admitted.

"I'm heading there right now."

Joyce hung up the phone right after.

Natalie put her phone down as she noticed the line going flat. She rubbed between her brows, removed her blanket and got out of bed.

As soon as she headed out of her room, her doorbell rang.

She walked over to her foyer and glanced at her intercom before opening the door. "Mr. Shane."

Shane had a navy blue suit on as he stood outside her door. The man lowered his gaze and eyeballed her. Noticing the bluish dark eye circles underneath her eyes, the man furrowed his brows. "Didn't you sleep last night?"

Natalie stepped aside to let him inside and replied with a weary tone, "I only managed a little sleep last night. Aren't you going on an overseas trip, Mr. Shane? Why are you still here?"

"Do you wish for me to leave that quickly?" Shane strode inside her apartment.

"Huh?" Natalie paused momentarily, puzzled by his remark.

Shane's eyes glinted. He walked over to the living room and said, "My flight's been delayed till noon. I want to send the kids to school before that."

"Ah, I see." Natalie nodded and did not ask further. She poured him a glass of water and went to wake her children up.

After they were done washing up and had breakfast, Natalie handed them over to Shane.

After they had left, Natalie wasted no time to lounge around the apartment. She went back to her room to change her clothes, put on heavy makeup to conceal her dark eye circles before heading to the hospital.

Upon reaching the hospital, she asked where Stanley was and headed toward his ward.

She had just reached the outside of his ward, and Stanley's spiteful voice filled the hallway. "Get lost! Cut the crap and get out of my face!"

"Stanley, will you please calm down?" Joyce held his hands as she sobbed and pleaded with the man. "Please listen to me and undergo the therapy, okay?"

"Therapy?" Stanley broke into derisive laughter upon hearing her. "I have the Rivers to thank for the way I am today! You're crying crocodile tears for asking me to undergo therapy! Let me repeat myself. Get the hell out of here! I don't want to see you!"

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"Stanley..." Despite feeling hurt, Joyce did not budge as she looked at him.

"You're still not leaving?" Stanley narrowed his eyes with pure hatred. The man grabbed a pillow and aimed it at her head.

Joyce flinched as she had not expected the man to flip out at her. It was too late for her to dodge when she finally regained her composure.

Thankfully, it was just a pillow. Even though her head hurt, she was not injured in any way.

Meanwhile, Natalie had seen everything through the glass pane on the door. Indignant for her friend, she felt the urge to drag Joyce away from the madman.

However, she decided against interfering in the matter which was clearly a private matter between the two. It's better that I stay out of this since my presence won't help anyway.

Natalie let go of the doorknob and retracted her feet at the thought.

The psychiatrist who was not saying anything previously shook his head helplessly as he looked at Joyce staring blankly at the pillow on the floor. "Ms. Rivers, I think it's better that you leave this ward first since Dr. Quinn is having an episode right now. Your presence will only make matters worse right now."

Joyce finally snapped out of her thoughts after listening to the psychiatrist. She picked up the pillow on the floor and put it back on the bed. The woman took one last look at Stanley's grimaced expression before she turned and headed for the door.

"Nat?" Joyce noticed Natalie who was standing right outside the door and was surprised. "When did you come here?"

"It's been a while." Natalie stepped aside to the row of chairs just nearby and took a seat.

Joyce hesitated for a moment and trailed behind her. "Are you here to visit Stanley?"

Natalie nodded her head.

Even though she still resented Stanley for what he tried to do to her last night, they were friends after all. She had not forgotten the fact that the man had actually saved her life.

Besides, she was worried about his condition and decided to come to have a look herself.

"In that case, you might have to wait for a while. The psychiatrist is trying to pacify Stanley. You can only go inside after he's calmed down," Joyce cast a glance at the ward entrance and said.

Natalie shook her head. "I'm not going in. In fact, I've never planned to go inside. I just want to take a look at him from outside. Besides, I really have no idea how to face him after what happened yesterday."

"I get it." Joyce nodded and turned around to face her. "You've heard it all, right? About what we were saying back in his ward?"

"Yes." Natalie confessed. She did not attempt to hide it from her friend.

Joyce bit down on her lip. "Nat, I'm really sorry. I really do not expect that his condition has worsened to this extent, and that he's even tried to hypnotize you. I'm apologizing on behalf of him. Will you please forgive him?"

Then, she got up and bowed down to Natalie as she apologized.

Natalie hurriedly got up and steadied her friend. She actually felt bad seeing Joyce being all apologetic. "Don't worry. I don't blame him. I'm going to overlook his mistake for what he's done for my family. But at the same time, I really can't treat him like a friend after what he has done."

"I understand. As long as you forgive him. Seeing how he's so obsessed with you, I think his condition is going to worsen if you don't forgive him." Joyce finally smiled with relief after knowing that Natalie was actually willing to forgive the man.

However, her next sentence made Joyce's smile froze on her face. "I've forgiven him, but what about Mr. Shane? Stanley did try to murder him. Admittedly, he failed to do so but he did cut his arm as well, causing him to bleed quite a lot. Mr. Shane did not report him to the police, but it doesn't mean that he's going to go easy on Stanley either."

"That..." All colors drained from Joyce's face as she hurriedly clutched Natalie's hand tight. "Nat, you have to save Stanley from being hurt by Mr. Shane."

"How am I going to help him?" Natalie retracted her hand and felt helpless.

Joyce clenched her palms. "You can definitely help him. You just need to convince Mr. Shane to not seek revenge."