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"Keep up!" Shane shouted at the doctor while he continued making his way to the elevator.

It was past midnight by the time they arrived at his apartment.

Mrs. Wilson was watching TV at the time and opened the door for them when she heard the commotion outside.

"What happened, sir?" Mrs. Wilson asked in surprise when she saw the messy state of their clothes.

"I'll tell you about it later. Right now, I need you to come to the bathroom with me," Shane said as he made his way towards the bathroom with Natalie in his arms.

Mrs. Wilson motioned for the doctor to take a seat before following Shane into the bathroom.

Shane then proceeded to fill the bathtub stripped Natalie naked before placing her in it.

Mrs. Wilson understood what had happened when she noticed the hickeys all over her body. "Sir, did you and Ms. Smith..."

Shane knew what she was going to say and mumbled a response to admit what he did.

"Congratulations, sir!" Mrs. Wilson exclaimed with a huge smile on her face.

I knew Mr. Shane was into Ms. Smith! There's no way he'd head over to her apartment and send her kids to school every day if he wasn't! I used to think that Ms. Smith wasn't really worthy of being with Mr. Shane, but I guess it's okay if he likes her and her two adorable children so much. His happiness is all that matters, after all!

Shane raised an eyebrow at Mrs. Wilson after hearing what she said. "You help bathe her. I'll go talk to the doctor."

He was still feeling lightheaded due to the effects of the drug.

"All right, go on, Sir. I'll take it from here." Mrs. Wilson nodded and grabbed a towel before sitting down by the bathtub.

Shane took one more look at Natalie and rubbed his forehead as he went to see the doctor in the living room.

The doctor examined his pulse and his pupils before announcing, "While the effects of the drug have mostly worn off, an injection is required to fully get rid of it in your system."

"Go ahead, then." Shane said groggily.

Having received his permission, the doctor retrieved a syringe from the first-aid kit.

Shane had just rolled up his sleeve when his phone started ringing.

He answered the call with his other arm when he saw that it was from Silas, "Has everything been taken care of?"

"Yes, and Jasmine has also confessed that she was acting under Harrison's instructions when she escaped the mental hospital. She was supposed to drug you and have sex with you so you would have to take responsibility over her."

Shane narrowed his eyes. "Take responsibility? In her dreams!"

Silas nodded with a look of disdain on his face. "The two of them had come up with the plan together. The idea was to get Jasmine pregnant with your child so that she'll be spared the prison sentence. Harrison would then force you into marrying her, killing two birds with one stone."

"Heh... What a brilliant plan they've got there, eh?" Shane's voice was ice-cold as he let out a chuckle.

Sean has set me up once five years ago, and now it's Harrison and Jasmine... Using Jacqueline's name was a smart move on their part, though. She even waited until I had drank that glass of water before appearing before me.

"Those guys roughed Jasmine up pretty badly, so she's been sent to the hospital for treatment. I've already informed Harrison about this. He's on his way to the hospital as we speak."

"Put her back into the mental hospital after that. Since she's pretending to be crazy to avoid prison, we'll give her a hand and make it a reality!" Shane said coldly.

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The doctor couldn't help but shudder when he heard that.

"As for Harrison..." Shane shifted his gaze towards the bathroom and continued after a brief pause, "I want Smith Group to go bankrupt within a day!"

I think I know why Harrison is doing all this... He's a greedily ambitious man and has always dreamed of making the Smith family one of the most powerful families in J City. However, he's powerless to do so on his own and has asked for my help countless times over the past five years. As I have never agreed to help out, he got desperate when his company started going bankrupt. That's why he came up with this crazy idea of forcing me into marrying Jasmine! He was hoping to save his company and help his family rise into power through me!

"Yes, Mr. Shane!" Silas hesitated for a bit before continuing, "But... what about Ms. Smith?"

"I don't think she'll mind," Shane said coldly.

She told me she no longer cares about Harrison, so it should be fine...

Silas nodded. "Understood, I'll see to it right away."

Shane then rolled his sleeve back down after hanging up the phone. He was seeing the doctor off at the door when Mrs. Wilson called out to him from the bathroom, "I've finished bathing Ms. Smith, sir!"

He made his way to the bathroom and helped put a bathrobe on Natalie before carrying her into his bed.

After that, he took a shower himself and blow-dried his hair before getting into bed with her.

Natalie froze in surprise when she woke up in an unfamiliar room the next day.

"Where am I?" she asked as she tried to get up, only to fall back down when she felt an extreme pain surge across her body.

That was when she recalled what happened yesterday and realized she was in Shane's house.

The bedroom door was opened, and she saw Shane standing there in casual attire. "You're finally awake?"

"D-Did we..." Natalie's voice was extremely hoarse as she tried to speak.

Realizing what she was trying to say, Shane grinned as he sat down beside her.

"What are you doing?" Natalie leaned back and stared at him cautiously.

Shane pursed his lips as he said, "I'm going to carry you out of bed."

Natalie shook her head. "N-No, I can do it myself..."

"All right, then. Go ahead."

With that, Natalie pulled the covers off and attempted to get out of bed a second time.

However, the extreme pain prevented her from even moving her legs.

Shane let out a chuckle as he picked her up and carried her out of the room.

The two kids were having breakfast in the living room while Mrs. Wilson helped wipe their faces.

They waved at Natalie in unison when they saw Shane carrying her.

"You sure are a sleepyhead, Mommy! We're almost finished with breakfast here!" Connor said.

"I know, right? And she even needs Dad to carry her like a baby!" Sharon added.

Natalie burned bright red when she heard that.

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Shane set her down on the chair in front of the kids before sitting down beside her. "Now, now, hurry up and finish your food. Mrs. Wilson will take you to school afterward."

Sharon nodded. "And you'll stay home with Mommy, right?"

"Yeah, that's right," Shane replied with a smile.

Natalie shot him a weird look in response.

"What's the matter?" he asked when he noticed the look on her face.

Natalie quickly turned the other way and said, "N-Nothing... I was just wondering what they were doing here, that's all..."

"I brought them over for breakfast," Shane explained while handing her a glass of warm milk.

Natalie kept quiet and seemed to be in deep thought after taking the glass from him.

At that moment, Mrs. Wilson came out from the kitchen with her breakfast. "You must be hungry, Ms. Smith. Here, have some."

Natalie forced a smile at her. "Thank you, Mrs. Wilson."

The two kids were soon finished with breakfast and grabbed their backpacks as they waved goodbye. "Bye, Mommy! Bye, Dad! We're off to school now!"

"All right, stay safe!" Shane called out to them before Natalie could even respond.

The kids nodded and marched out the house with Mrs. Wilson, leaving Natalie and Shane alone in the living room.

"Mr. Shane... I would like to have a talk with you about what happened last night..." Natalie said while putting down her cutlery.

"Perfect, so do I." Shane replied as he wiped his mouth elegantly with a napkin.

Natalie took a deep breath. "I think we should forget about what happened last night..."

"Let's get married!" Shane cut her off with a serious look on his face.

Natalie went wide-eyed with shock and disbelief. "S-Sorry, what did you just say?"

"Let's get married!" Shane repeated himself.

Natalie waved her hands frantically as she stammered, "G-G-Get m-married?"

Shane nodded at her in response.

Natalie swallowed nervously. "Are you being serious, Mr. Shane?"

"I'm always serious," Shane replied.

Natalie stood up and took a few steps back from the dining table. "S-Sorry... This is a bit too much for me to take in... I need some time to calm down..."

Shane nodded. "Sure, take your time."

He then went back to eating his breakfast calmly while she stood there and stared at him nervously.

"Why would you suddenly want to marry me, Mr. Shane? Are you trying to take responsibility for what you did to me?" she asked after calming down a little.

Shane took a sip of his coffee. "Pretty much, yeah."

Taking responsibility is just part of the reason. I had long since planned on marrying her...

Natalie pursed her lips and said calmly, "I'm sorry, I can't do it."

Shane frowned. "Why not?"

"Because..." Natalie continued after giving it some thought, "The kids won't agree to it."

Shane broke into a smile upon hearing that. "In that case, you don't have to worry about a thing because they've actually wanted us to get married right from the start. I can tell from the way they call me 'Dad'. Besides, did you really think they don't know about us sleeping together last night? They just chose to keep quiet about it."

Natalie froze. Wait a minute... He's right! They didn't seem surprised at all when they saw him carry me out of the room earlier!

Shane wiped his hands clean and tossed the napkin onto his plate. "So, will you agree to marry me now?"

Natalie shook her head. "They may want you as their dad, but I still won't marry you because I don't plan on marrying someone I don't love. You don't have to marry me to take responsibility either, as that'd be unfair to Ms. Graham."

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"What does this have to do with Jacqueline?" Shane asked with a frown.

"You two are in love, aren't you? What would Ms. Graham do if you were to marry me instead? Besides, I don't want to be a homewrecker!"

In fact, what he did last night already counts as cheating on her...

Shane raised an eyebrow at her. "Who says we're in love with each other?"

Natalie stared at him. "Is that not the case?"

Shane pursed his lips. "No, it isn't. I have never loved Jacqueline at all. You're the person who I love!"

Natalie's eyes widened in disbelief as she stammered, "W-What... What did you say? D-Did you just s-say you l-l-love me?"

Shane nodded and grabbed her by the hand. "Yes, that's right."

"That's impossible!" Natalie brushed his hand off and chuckled. "Stop messing with me, Mr. Shane! I remember you saying you don't like me at all when we were on the cruise ship, and now you expect me to believe that you love me?"

"No, I never said that. I simply remained silent at the time," Shane corrected her.

Natalie clenched her fists. "Isn't that the same as admitting to it?"

"No, I just didn't want to deny it at the time." Shane shook his head as he continued, "I refused to admit to it at the time because Alice was spying on you, and I was worried that she would go after you if I said yes."

Natalie narrowed her eyes. "Is that so?"

"I would never lie to you," Shane said with a serious look on his face.

Natalie lowered her gaze as she thought about what Joyce said a few days ago.

Joyce told me that Shane listens to everything I say because he likes me. I didn't really believe her then, and yet... Here I am, hearing him confess his love to me...

It took Natalie quite a while to collect her thoughts and regain her composure.

"What about Ms. Graham, then? How are you related to her?" she asked after finally finding her voice.

"My mother took her in as a goddaughter when she was still alive," Shane replied.

"Goddaughter?" Natalie stared at him in surprise. "So... you two are siblings, then?"

Shane nodded. "That's right. Who told you that I love her?"

"No one. I just assumed you two were in love with each other because everyone seems to be implying it when they talk about you two..." Natalie said after a brief pause.

"Well, that's not the case here."

Natalie let out a sigh of relief and was somewhat delighted by what she heard.

She had always thought of them as a couple and felt really guilty about what happened last night, so finding out that they weren't dating came as a huge relief.

Shane grinned when he saw the smile on her face. "Now, do you see that you're the only person I love?"

Natalie was about to make her way back to the dining table when the pain shot through her body and caused her legs to give out.

Shane quickly caught her and carried her onto the sofa.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Shane... I still can't bring myself to marry you just yet... I wasn't prepared for this sudden confession and proposal, so..."

Natalie couldn't bring herself to finish her sentence for fear of angering him with her repeated rejections, especially since she no longer had reason for concern.

To her surprise, Shane was not mad at her in the slightest. Instead, he simply ran his hand gently through her hair as he said, "I understand that my proposal was a little too sudden, which can be quite overwhelming. Don't worry, I won't force you into making a decision. I'll wait till you're able to accept me."

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He had always known that she wouldn't say yes to his proposal, so he didn't mind waiting for her to get used to him.

Natalie flashed him a heartwarming smile. "Thank you, Mr. Shane."

"You don't have to thank me. You look like you're still in pain, so you should get a bit more sleep. I've had Joyce call in sick for you, so don't you worry about a thing," Shane said while pointing at her handbag on the coffee table.

Natalie froze. "Wait... Does that mean... Joyce knows about us?"

"I didn't tell her anything, but I think she guessed it," Shane said casually.

He had called Joyce using Natalie's phone the first thing in the morning, so it was only natural that she would jump to conclusions.

Natalie buried her face in her hands.

I'm done for... Joyce is a blabbermouth, so I'm pretty sure Mom's going to find out about me spending the night with Shane soon...

Shane carried Natalie back to his room, and she fell asleep shortly after getting into bed.

The doorbell rang as Shane made his way back to the living room after tucking her in, and he saw Silas standing at the door upon opening it.

"Good morning, Mr. Shane."

"Come on in."

Silas entered the house and followed him to his study before saying, "The Smith family is done for, Mr. Shane. Harrison is currently in the process of property liquidation as we speak and will declare bankruptcy after that."

"With him declaring bankruptcy doesn't mean he's actually poor. Harrison owns a ton of properties and antiques that are worth quite a fortune," Shane said with a sneer.

Silas adjusted his glasses. "Even so, that money won't last him very long if he doesn't have any income."

Shane clenched his fists as he ordered, "Which is why he will definitely try to rebuild Smith Group. I want you to keep a close eye on him and shut him down the minute he tries anything."

"Understood!" Silas replied, despite feeling a little sorry for Harrison.

That cunning old man put everything on the line by sending Jasmine to seduce Mr. Shane, all for the sake of gaining the Thompson family's support to ensure the smooth sailing of the Smith family business... However, his plan backfired, and he lost everything as a result... Jeez, did he really think he was able to outsmart Mr. Shane? Even if Jasmine did somehow get back together with Mr. Shane, he still wouldn't lend the Smith family a helping hand! After all, he would've done so five years ago if he wanted to!

"How are things with Jasmine?" Shane asked while leaning back with his fingers crossed.

"She has regained consciousness and is currently still hospitalized due to the severity of her injuries," Silas replied.

Shane arched an eyebrow at him and motioned for him to go on.

"She can no longer have children, and will most likely suffer a disability in one of her legs," Silas continued.

In other words, she would become a cripple.

Shane's expression was as cold as ice upon hearing that. "Get her transferred back to the mental hospital once she's discharged, and tell the medical staff there to 'take good care of her'!"

He placed extra emphasis on the last five words of his sentence.

Silas knew what he meant and nodded solemnly. "Understood... Also, I've managed to track down the source of the drug that Jasmine gave you. She got it from some punk who used to live next door to her. He has dozens of men at his beck and call, so she was never able to completely break it off with him. The two of them are still..."

Shane saw the look on Silas' face and understood what he was implying.

"They're having an affair, aren't they?"