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The car stopped in front of the office. I took off my seatbelt and was about to alight from the car when John shouted, "Don't move!"

He then exited the car and came around to my side. Opening the door in a valet-like fashion, he completed his act by offering his hand to assist me out of the car. He teased, "Ms. Stovall, we've arrived at the office. Please."

I burst into laughter as I laid my hand in his. "Why are you joking around? I'm just a legal apprentice, not a full-fledged lawyer."

Passing the lawyer qualification exam was only the start. I also needed to undertake a year-long apprenticeship to obtain a license to practice. Within this year, I would need to complete ten cases independently as well. Only then I could officially practice law.

"You'll be one soon enough. I need to start practicing now," John teased playfully.

"If you're that bored, you should spend more time with Emma. I don't know why you're playing games with her when you're obviously crazy about her," I deadpanned.

John arched a brow at me before stuttering, "Y-You... Hey, you're going to be late! You should go in now, go on then!"

John didn't give me a chance to retort as he pushed me into the revolving doors of the building. He smiled mischievously at me after forcing me into the lobby. I couldn't tell if he had taken any of my advice to heart.

After I registered at the reception, I was brought to Zander's office. "Mr. Hoffman is in a meeting now. Please wait here, Ms. Stovall."

I smiled in acknowledgment. I looked around the office casually after the receptionist had left.

I heard that Tinsel Group was the best law firm in all of K City. Yet the office that had been assigned to Zander was barely a hundred square feet. There were two desks in his office. While the decor was decent, it was a far cry from what I had imagined.

About fifteen minutes later, the door opened from the outside. Zander entered the office with an older man in tow.

"Good morning," I greeted with a smile.

"Mr. Baker, this is Scarlett, whom I've mentioned on several occasions. We went to school together. Scarlett, this is Mr. Eugene Baker. He's one of the most prominent property lawyers in the field." Zander quickly introduced the two of us.

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Baker."

"The pleasure's all mine." Eugene continued, "Zander has very high praise for you; I hope you don't let him down."

I smiled, not knowing how to go about replying to such civilities.

As if he understood my thoughts, Eugene left to give us some space. "I won't bother the two of you then. Zander, you should bring her around the office. The two of you will report to me from now on."

"Yes, Mr. Baker. Thank you."

With that, Eugene left the room with a cigar in hand.

Now, only Zander and I were alone in the office.

"This table is yours." Zander pointed at an empty desk.

I looked at the desk before turning my perplexed gaze back on him.

We'll be facing each other?

"Isn't this kind of inappropriate, Mr. Hoffman?" I tried to assume a civil manner. "I just came here, and I already have a private office? I'm sure some colleagues will be displeased."

Zander stared at me for a moment as he pondered something. "So you think you're like the other people sitting there? If that's the case, why would I try so hard to bring you to our firm?"

I blushed in embarrassment, my words caught in my throat.

Instead of addressing my discomfort, Zander picked up some documents from his desk and passed them to me. "These are the case files for a divorce trial involving the renowned billionaire, Aaron Gomez. Please familiarize yourself with the details of the case. We need to accompany Mr. Baker to court in two days."

"Aaron Gomez? Aren't the news always reporting on his bachelorhood? When did he get married?" I opened the documents, and my jaw dropped as I read the contents. "He has three kids? And it's a cheating scandal?"

This obviously wasn't a great time for gossiping, and I could sense Zander's confused gaze on me at my outburst. I felt like crawling into a hole out of embarrassment, but alas, I could only close the documents meekly and return to my seat to review the information.

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It was finally time to get off work. I was dying to see my kids, but Zander entered the office with a stack of documents before I could leave. He stared at me in confusion.

We stared at each other for a moment with me feeling awkward while Zander frowned.

After a while, he said, "You're getting ready to head off?"

"Yes." I pointed at the clock as I asked, "It's six, right?"

Zander glanced at the clock before he said coolly, "On the first day of my apprenticeship, I was in the office till six in the evening the next day. Ms. Stovall, I hope you understand that Tinsel Group is where it is today because of our hard work. Becoming a lawyer isn't child's play."

As if agitated by his own statement, he carried the documents back to his own desk silently. The mood of the room cooled several degrees.

Being thirty of age this year, I didn't think I would be told off this badly by a man a few years younger than me.

Despite my embarrassment, I knew Zander was absolutely right. Being a lawyer was never going to be a piece of cake.

As such, I tossed my purse back on the desk before walking out of the office in search of a paralegal. I had her produce all the case files related to Eugene in the past year. I was determined to work my ass off and make up for my inexperience.

When I re-entered the room with the paralegal and piles of papers in hand, Zander's expression told me he was viewing me in a different light.

However, his impression of me was the least of my concerns. I wanted to do a good job for my sake, as well as Ashton's and my children's. No one else's opinions mattered.

I soon realized that the situation was more complicated than I had imagined. Zander was working like a machine. The clock struck eleven but he showed no signs of getting off work.

While I didn't want to give up like this, I began to feel annoyed. Frankly, poring through the case files was a bore. I was no longer used to sitting in an office for long periods of time as well. Every second I stayed here felt like torture.

Finally, at eleven thirty, a welcome voice rang through the office. "Scarlett? Where are you?"

It's John!

"I'm in here!"

I felt immense relief at his arrival. I jerked up from my seat and looked out the office for him, holding back the urge to rush out straight away.

John had planned to fetch me home that day but I sent him a WhatsApp message about my plans to stay late in the office that day and didn't check my phone afterward. Luckily, he was smart enough to come knocking on the office himself. Otherwise, I might really have to stay here till the next morning.

John followed the sound of my voice till he located our office. Pushing open the door, he looked at the chaos within. Zander stopped whatever he was doing and met John's gaze. There was suddenly an awkward tension in the air.

"You're Letty's supervisor?" John raised a brow, putting on an intimidating stance.

"You're mistaken. I'm just her colleague." Zander placed his hands in his pocket, an indifferent expression on his face.

"Right, then we're leaving." John turned his head away from Zander before tilting his jaw in my direction. "Come on, let's go home."

John exuded a natural commanding aura. Though he didn't introduce himself, his arrogance hinted at his powerful position. A smart person would avoid offending him.

However, there were smart people in this world who held different beliefs. While they were well aware of the social niceties associated with such figures, they chose to ignore them in favor of the rules and regulations.

"As Scarlett's family, you should be happy that she's working hard toward her goal. You shouldn't be blocking her path." Zander spoke firmly, further souring the mood.

I froze in the middle of slinging my bag on my shoulder.

No one could deny Zander's diligence when it came to working, but I felt that he had crossed the line with his provocative statement. He seemed like a totally different person compared to our previous interactions, and I felt somewhat cheated by my earlier impression of him.

"I'm sorry Mr. Hoffman," I interrupted before John could open his mouth. I planted myself next to John before declaring to Zander, "I hope you understand that John is the closest family I have. What he does or says isn't any of your business. I know that you're a senior here, but that doesn't mean you can criticize anyone as you please."