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Joshua was sent to the emergency room and hospitalized for three whole days. When he awoke once more, he received a call from Nellie.

"Daddy." From the other end of the phone, the little girl's cute whine drifted into his ears. "Do you remember what day it is tomorrow?"

Lying on the hospital bed, Joshua took a glimpse at the calendar on the wall and narrowed his eyes slightly. "It's your Mommy's birthday."

He never forgot Luna's birthday. When they were still married, every year he wanted to give her a proper celebration. But when the day arrived, he felt that his preparations were too pretentious and overly affectionate, so in the end, he would always throw the present at her casually, telling her that it was just a random purchase. Where in fact...every present he gifted her was chosen carefully by him.

Deep down, he was actually delighted to see her hold the present in excitement and addressed him as 'dear But in the past, his pride as a man made him feel as if falling in love with her easily was something to be ashamed of. That was why he never formally celebrated her birthday with her, he never even wished her a happy birthday.

Six years ago after Luna was involved in the accident, he wanted to tell her all this, but she was no longer around. This year...he had prepared her present a long time ago.

"Daddy, I'm surprised you remember!"

Nellie was excited to hear that her father remembered her mother's birthday. "So did you prepare a present for Mommy?"

Joshua nodded. "Yeah."

"Nigel and I prepared a present too!" Nellie took a deep breath. "But I think Mommy has gone through a very tough time in the past few years, taking care of the three of us all by herself."

Then, the little girl sighed, "When we were living abroad, our godfather Malcolm would celebrate Mommy's birthday for her, but Mommy always rejected having big celebrations. She felt that since Nigel was still sick, she shouldn't have any over-the- top celebrations for herself. But this year, both Nigel and I have finally recovered, even though Neil isn't with us, but we already have news of him. I think Mommy should have a wonderful, happy birthday this year! "

Joshua lifted his lips in a smile, successfully reading the underlying message in his daughter's words. "You want to organize a grand birthday party for your Mommy?"

"Yes!" Nellie's voice turned excited. "In the past, we thought Mommy preferred peace and quiet, but Mommy enjoyed herself that day during the party in the little garden. We realized it's not that she doesn't like noise and crowds... So I called you to ask whether we could borrow some money from you, so we could organize a grand birthday celebration for Mommy... Nigel and I can write you an IOU if you want, we'll pay you back when we grow up!

Lying on the headboard and listening to his daughter discuss borrowing money from him in such a serious manner, Joshua could not help but lift

his lips and smile. "Tell me, what do you plan to do?"

Seeing as her father did not reject her suggestion, Nellie cheered in happiness and excitement. "Nigel and I have so many plans! I'll ask him to send them to you immediately! " With that, the little girl ended the call excitedly.

A minute later, Joshua received an email from Nigel. The email contained the plans for Luna's birthday celebrations. He scanned through the email, the children's effort and attention were obvious to the eye. However, many of the plans they laid out would be very difficult to implement.

Seeing Joshua study the proposal seriously and making remarks on it, Lucas frowned. "Sir, do you really plan to hold a birthday party for Mrs. Lynch?"

Joshua nodded without even bothering to look up. "The incident a few days ago angered her, this party would also serve as an apology."

With that, he closed his laptop. "Ask the doctors to give me a steroid shot. I want to be discharged." Lucas' eyes widened in shock. "No, you can't! "

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"Sir, you're quite heavily injured, you know that yourself too. The doctor said you need to rest. You can't afford another mishap, otherwise, you'll..." The rest of his words did not need to be said.

Lucas remained silent for a few moments. "Or...you can prepare the proposal, and I'll get it done. You don't have to worry about any tasks assigned to me, you know that, right?"

Joshua lay at the head of the bed, his face pale and bloodless, a faint smile hanging from the corners of his lips as he said, "I do worry though. I 'm the only one who knows what Luna likes and doesn't like.

Besides..." He lifted his lips and continued saying, "In the past few weeks, she suffered so much because of me, I have to organize this party for her personally " With that, he sat up and made a move to climb down the bed.

Lucas looked at his pale complexion and chalky white lips and gritted his teeth. "I'll get the doctor! "

Evening the next day.

After a whole day of shopping with Anne, Luna returned home exhausted. She did not know what was wrong with Anne, suddenly claiming that all the clothes in her closet did not fit her anymore and insisted on dragging her out shopping. Luna thought she would be done by the afternoon, so she agreed.

But then that woman... Not only did she buy clothes for summer and autumn, she even bought winter wear and spring wear, using the excuse that out-of- season clothes were on sale. At the end, when Luna was already thoroughly worn out, Anne even visited a maternity store, saying that she wanted to prepare for when she got pregnant in the future... Luna had no choice and could only accompany her from 10 a.m. till 5 p.m.

Starving from the lack of food the entire day and with the soles of her feet aching from over-exertion,

the moment she returned home, Luna lay boneless on the sofa like a dead fish.

After panting laboriously for a while, catching her breath, she finally realized that the villa was exceptionally quiet. Nellie did not greet her at the door, Nigel did not wait for her in the living room with his laptop in front of him. Even Lily could not be seen bustling around in the kitchen cooking.

Luna vaguely sensed that something was wrong. She sat up and called out loudly, "Lily? Nellie, Nigel?"

There was no response.

Luna grew alarmed and hurriedly rushed upstairs in search of them.

Both the children's room upstairs and the study were empty. The two children and Lily seemed to have disappeared into thin air.

She hurriedly dialed Nigel's and Lily's numbers, but their ringtones were heard in the empty villa.

Luna was so anxious she felt as if her chest was on fire. The children would not just leave the villa on a whim, and they definitely would not leave their

phones behind!

She was about to call Anne when she noticed a piece of paper on Nigel's bed.

It read, 'Come to the beach outside the city.'

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Luna sucked in a cold breath. Were Nellie and Nigel... kidnapped by Aura's men?

At this thought, she rushed downstairs, hailed a taxi by the roadside, and headed to the beach. Seated in the car, she gazed out the window fretfully and took out her phone, dialing Joshua's number. Before it even started beeping, however, she gathered her wits together and immediately ended the call.

What was wrong with her...

How come when anything happened, the first person she thought of was Joshua?

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Ending the call, Luna took a deep breath, feeling lost and anxious.

She considered calling the police. But Aura was so watchful and vigilant, if she called the police... She was worried Nellie and Nigel would be in danger.

Even if she successfully protected Nellie and Nigel, what about Neil? If the police came and saved Nigel and Nigel, Aura would definitely take out her anger on Neil.

It was not worth the risk. So she had no choice but to stride forward alone.

At this thought, she clutched the phone tightly in her hand and stared out the window anxiously.

They had to be safe. Nellie and Nigel had to be safe!

The entire journey from Blue Bay Villa to the beach, Luna's heart pounded wildly in her chest. She did not know what Aura had in mind, neither did she know what would be waiting in store for her once she arrived there. She also wondered whether she could call for help...

Just like that, with a wildly pounding heart, Luna arrived at the beach. Stepping out of the car, she walked along the beach, searching for any signs of the children.

The beach that was usually crowded was completely empty, the entire area worryingly quiet.

There were no streetlights on the beach, with every

step she took, Luna's heart beat anxiously in her chest, the only sounds drifting into her ear were the gentle crash of the waves against the beach and the flapping of seagulls' wings.

The longer she searched, the more desperate she grew, the loom of despair growing larger and larger. She was afraid she would not be able to find Nellie and Nigel, afraid that the slip of paper was just a cruel joke to torment her.

If she failed to find the children here, where could she go to look for them? Surely she had other options besides just sitting and waiting for Aura to make the first move?

Finally, she walked to the entrance to the Castle Hotel located on the beach. She was surprised to see that the usually brightly lit hotel was completely dark at the moment.

Standing in front of the hotel, she was lost and confused.

She forced the tears and despair down, and was about to call Bonnie when "Mommy! " A bright, childish voice rang across the beach.

Luna paused, it was Nellie's voice! She turned around immediately and looked in the direction where Nellie's voice came from

Instantly, the entire hotel was brightly lit. Fireworks exploded across the dark, night sky. The birthday song was heard from the beach, loud and joyful.

Nellie and Nigel sat on both ends of a little cart, each holding a bouquet of flowers in their hands. In the middle of the cart was a huge three-layered cake.

The man pushing the cart was Joshua whom she had not seen in a long time. Behind him stood Bonnie, Shannon, Gwen, Anne... Even Samson, Zayne, and Arianna were present.

All of her friends and colleagues were there.

The initially quiet and empty beach was instantly crowded. Everyone gathered around her slowly, singing the happy birthday song.

Luna stood in her spot, dazed. Her emotions switched from fear and despair, to shock, surprise, and even - anger.

Finally, Joshua pushed the children and the cake in front of her. Nellie and Nigel jumped down from the cart and stuffed the flowers into her lap. "Mommy, happy birthday! "

Nellie smiled cheekily as she looked at Luna. To mend the bond between Joshua and Luna, she purposely gave all the credit for tonight's celebrations to her father. "You must be so surprised, right?! Daddy prepared this surprise birthday party for you! "

Luna held the flowers and tried her best to force a smile onto her face. But she failed. When everyone was happily celebrating her birthday, she could not find it in her to be happy at all.

This surprise was not at all welcome, not at all fun.

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She herself knew...how much despair filled her chest the moment she saw the slip of paper and thought that Nellie and Nigel had been kidnapped.

They had no idea. They thought this was good for her, a welcome surprise. The worry, panic, despair that she felt on the journey here should not exist, she should be happy.

"Luna." Joshua pushed down the pain radiating from his belly, and strode toward her like a healthy man, holding the present he prepared for her in his hands. He looked at her, his eyes warm and gentle. "After so many years, this is the first time I'm celebrating your birthday with you." He handed the gift to her. "I hope you like it."

The moment the words left his mouth, the crowd started to shout in excitement.

"Luna, come on, take it, President Lynch put in a lot of effort into choosing your present!"

"Exactly! He booked the entire beach and hotel, he's so romantic! "

"I can't believe this is their first time Luna's birthday, no wonder he worked so hard for this..."

The roar of the crowd rang in her ears in an endless loop. But she could not hear them at all.

She lifted her eyes and stared fixedly at Joshua. "You prepared all of this?"

He nodded. "Yes."

"Asking Nellie and Nigel to leave the house...1eaving me a note, all of this is your idea?"

He frowned and was about to shake his head when Nellie, who was standing beside him, tugged at his pant leg. He remembered the deal with his daughter, so he smiled lightly and looked at Luna gently. "Yes."

Luna bit her lip tightly and looked at him furiously, then raised her hand "Slap --! " A loud, clear slap rang across the beach.

Everyone stared at the scene in front of them in shock. The birthday song came to an abrupt halt.

Luna did not put much strength into her slap, but Joshua was too weak. Under the force of her slap, he lost his balance and stumbled backward a few steps, knocking into the cart behind him. The few knife wounds on his tummy that had yet to recover collided directly against the sharp edges of the cart. Sweat beaded on his forehead as the mind-numbing pain took over his body, his complexion turning pale instantly.

Beside him, Lucas noticed this and rushed over, wanting to help support him. But with a warning glare, Lucas stayed in his spot.

Joshua straightened himself slowly and schooled his expression, not allowing anyone to see the pain he was currently suffering.

"Joshua Lynch, you enjoy playing me for a fool, don't you?" Luna bit her lip and glared at him. "This is already the second time! I was already mad the last

time you sent me an anonymous text just to have a chat with me in the alley, I know you can tell! You did this on purpose, didn't you?"

The more she spoke, the angrier she got, her teeth clenched tightly, her voice barely squeezing out through the gaps in her teeth. "Do you know what sort of life I'm living now, every day I'm scared and worried, afraid something will happen to my children! You lured me out with Nellie and Nigel's disappearance, do you know I was so worried on the way here that I almost planned out my funeral? Do you have to use such a devastating way to trick me over here just to celebrate my birthday?"

Joshua was completely stunned. So was everyone else present.

Luna threw the present Joshua gifted her onto the ground. "Plus, since I almost died six years ago, I no longer like to celebrate my birthday. For the past six years, I only celebrated my birthday to make the children happy. Someone with no past and no future has no right to celebrate her birthday! Joshua Lynch, my past and my future were both ruined by you, you have no right to celebrate my birthday for me! "

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Instantly, it was so quiet that the only sounds that could be heard were the crash of the waves against the shore.

Everyone stared at Luna in shock. No one expected that a perfect birthday celebration would turn out like this...

Nellie stared at the scene in front of her eyes dazedly, nearly bursting into tears of anxiety. Actually, hers and Nigel's disappearance, and the note, were both her ideas. Daddy actually opposed this idea, saying that Mommy would not like it, that she would be anxious and worried. But she thought this was the best plan. Under her insistence, Daddy finally agreed. And now...Mommy slapped Daddy!

She jogged to Luna's side anxiously and grabbed her hand. "Mommy, don't be mad, actually I came up with this idea, not Daddy! If you're mad, just get mad at me. Daddy just wanted you to be happy..."

But at the moment, anger had overtaken her mind completely. She looked at Nellie who tried her best to shoulder responsibility for this mishap and a sneer appeared on her lips.

"Joshua Lynch, you're perfect. Now that something bad happened, you ask Nellie to take the blame for you? Your shamelessness knows no bounds! "

With that, she put down the flowers in her arms and swept her eyes coldly at the crowd in front of her. "Have fun celebrating my birthday." Leaving these words behind, she turned and left. The sounds of Nellie's cries and the discussion of the crowd tang out from behind her.

She strode forward, not pausing for a single moment. Unconsciously, tears flowed down her cheeks. Joshua knew she did not like jokes like this, but still insisted on using the children and playing a prank on her, on her birthday nonetheless!

She also knew that everyone thought she was being an ungrateful wench, causing a fuss out of nothing. It was just a joke centered around the children's disappearance.

Yes, to someone else, it was just a joke. The despair, helplessness, and fear she felt for nearly an hour... was all a joke!

Leaving the beach, she walked along the seaside road in the direction of the city. The noise from the beach drifted further and further away behind her until nothing could be heard anymore. All that was left of the wail of the wind in her ears.

At that moment, Luna's cell phone rang. It was a call from Anne. Luna frowned and recalled the scene where Anne stood behind Joshua, happily singing the happy birthday song. Her heart squeezed in pain and she ended the call without answering.

Immediately, her phone rang again. It was a call from Bonnie. Once again, she ended the call. It rang, and she ended the call once more. Finally, when she was about to switch off her phone in annoyance, it rang again. This time, it was a call from Christian.

Luna paused and remembered that Christian was not among the crowd on the beach just now. She sucked In a deep breath and answered.

"Happy birthday." On the other end of the phone, he lifted his lips and laughed, "I wanted to tell you a few days ago, but I forgot. My flight is leaving tonight, I need to return home. The court order is out, I have to go home and prepare for it."

Christian's tone was casual. "Initially, I wanted you to come and send me off if you had the time. But I heard tonight is your birthday and Joshua organized a party for you, so I gave up. This call is goodbye, I guess."

Luna pursed her lips. "How much longer till your flight leaves?"

Christian glanced at the time.