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Shermaine was aware that her movie wasn't doing very well. In contrast, the box office for Clarissa's movie was skyrocketing, causing her to be filled with frustration.

Her original intention was to infuriate Clarissa. Before her movie was screened, the media was already placing both movies in comparison. With Shermaine's help, they managed to dig out details of their messy relationship from the past.

Feeling desperate, Shermaine tried all ways to garner the public's attention. The content no longer mattered.

Since she couldn't get Gary to kill Clarissa's baby, she figured she could cause a miscarriage by angering her instead.

Although it wasn't a realistic idea, Shermaine didn't care. All she wanted to do was mess with Clarissa.

Unfortunately, Clarissa didn't respond at all. It felt as if she didn't care about whatever Shermaine did.

Consequently, Shermaine felt that her plan had backfired and she was the one who ended up enraged.

When the movie's box office receipts kept increasing, and the pregnant Clarissa was spotted at the cinema with an attentive Matthew, Shermaine's fury intensified further.

In front of others, Shermaine still kept up her humble façade. But in private, she was already filled with jealous rage.

"Ms. Smallwood, the box office receipts for Clarissa & Matthew has exceeded two hundred million. Also, these are the latest reviews..."

When the assistant saw Shermaine's gloomy expression, she didn't dare say much as she handed the documents to Shermaine.

Despite the fact that Shermaine was cordial to everyone including her, the assistant could feel the darkness in Shermaine when she wasn't smiling. Even when she did, the assistant could feel that it wasn't sincere.

When she brought up her thoughts with her other colleagues, they felt that she was just imagining things.

Nevertheless, she never did dare make eye contact with Shermaine or even stay a second longer with her.

When the assistant turned to leave, Shermaine called out to her, "Wait a moment."

The assistant trembled for a second before turning around to be greeted with a smile from Shermaine.

"I'm sorry. I'm not in a good mood today. Did I scare you?"

"No, Ms. Smallwood."

"I'm sure you're aware that our movie has made a loss. So, I can barely smile."

Smiling wryly, the assistant was stumped as she didn't know what to say.

"Alright now, off you go."

Only then did the assistant heave a sigh of relief and quickly left the office.

Looking out her window, Shermaine couldn't help but laugh when she saw her assistant looking on edge despite having returned to her seat.

The next day, when Shermaine came into the office, the assistant had gone back to her hometown for something urgent.

"Ms. Smallwood, your assistant just called and said that she has to take urgent leave because someone in the family is sick. But later on, she told me that she wants to quit. I'm sorry for the way she's behaving. It's very unbecoming of her..."

Shermaine shook her head. "I understand. Everyone has their own problems. I'll just get a new assistant instead. Anyway, since her family is facing trouble, why don't you see how you can help her? Let's transfer an additional month's salary into her card."

"Ms. Smallwood, you're really generous."

"It's nothing. Now, get back to work..."

When Shermaine returned to her office and closed the door, she could still hear her subordinates singing her praises.

"Ms. Smallwood is both kind and considerate. She has never treated any of her subordinates badly. I wonder why her assistant quit. What a foolish girl..."

"She has something urgent after all. But, losing a wonderful boss like Ms. Smallwood is her loss."

"That's true. This is the best place I have ever worked in. Ms. Smallwood is the best."

Despite the comments being mostly flattery, Shermaine still enjoyed hearing them.

She loved it when they acknowledged her as a righteous person and praised her for it.

The moment she took a seat, Shermaine received a call.

"Hey Babe, did you miss me?"

Closing the blinds, Shermaine turned and entered her break room. She whispered, "I have no time to miss you."

"Tsk. You really are heartless. Babe, I have just disposed of your assistant. Is this how you thank me?"

"Get straight to the point, or I'm ending the call."

"Doesn't missing you count? Tonight, I'll see you at the usual place."

Shermaine wanted to turn him down but changed her mind at the last minute.

That night, the moment Shermaine entered their usual joint, she was pinned against the door by Gary. There, they made love passionately.

After that, they took a shower and continued in bed.

Once their session ended, Shermaine leaned on the headboard, sharing a smoke with Gary. Both of them just lay there in silence.

After a while, Shermaine remarked, "You told me that you would exact revenge on my behalf. Why haven't you done anything over the last few months? Have you forgotten about it?"

Laughing, Gary hugged Shermaine as he continued to fondle her body.

"Of course not, Babe. Before the old man died, he told me to take care of you. Of course I'll keep my word. Anyway, don't worry. Isn't it just about revenge?"

"In that case, have you done anything?"

"Not yet. But, it's important that we have a strategy as we can't underestimate Matthew. Also, Clarissa hides at home all day long which makes her difficult to reach. Hence, I'm waiting for an opportunity for which we can come up with a better plan."

"What do you have in mind?"

Gary laughed deviously before whispering in Shermaine's ear.

Shermaine raised her eyebrow. "That means I still have to wait?"

"What other choice do you have? That's the only window when you can do something."

After giving it some thought, Shermaine stubbed her cigarette in frustration. Pushing Gary away, she got out of bed and headed to the bathroom. Standing in the shower, her mind contemplated Gary's plan.

Perhaps, that's the only way. Nevertheless, it's the best option.

Shermaine smirked.

This must be fate!

Suddenly, Gary hugged her from behind and pressed her against the wall. "Babe, am I good to you or what?"

Tilting her head, Shermaine sneered, "It depends."

"Haha... Of course."

Without further ado, his body sprang into action while Shermaine endured his advances with an indifferent expression.

It wasn't until he was satisfied that Shermaine could shower and get dressed properly. After that, she left the hotel.

Given that the movie's box office receipts totaled hundreds of millions and the movie reviews were decent, Clarissa felt extremely satisfied especially since the movie's budget was only ten million.

As she was the producer with Tyson Corporation as the largest investor, she knew she had to share the spoils with the main actors.

Hence, after discussing with Yael, she decided to give all of them a big bonus.

Consequently, she was also obliged to attend the celebratory dinner.

Worried that history would repeat itself if they went out, Matthew decided to organize the celebration at Zen Highlands instead.

Although many guests were expected and much preparation was needed, it wasn't a problem for Zen Highlands due to its massive capacity.

Consequently, Mrs. Lawson was in-charge of engaging a caterer from a hotel to professionally manage the event. Hence, there was nothing for Clarissa to worry about other than enjoying herself.

In the evening, many of their friends arrived. Among them were Mr. Ferguson and Luke.

Luke had been invited by Yael. Hence, no one dared to chase him out. As long as he didn't cause any trouble, Clarissa would tolerate his presence.

When Luke entered with Mr. Ferguson, he remarked candidly at Clarissa, "Why have you put on so much weight? You look really ugly."

Squirming her lips, Clarissa snorted and ignored him. When she saw Roxanne standing behind him, she went over to welcome her.

The moment Roxanne saw Clarissa, she was intrigued by her pregnant belly.

"Clarissa, it's really mysterious."

Clarissa chuckled. "Is it? When you get married and have kids, you will realize that other than it being a wonder, it can also be tormenting."

Roxanne was astounded. After both of them went into the house to chat, more guests started to arrive. Everyone was amazed at how big her tummy was. Some were filled with curiosity while others were filled with fear...

"Clarissa, is it a girl?"

Clarissa shook her head. "I don't know as we want to keep it a surprise. Furthermore, I hope that it's not a son as Matthew has been dreaming of having a daughter. I'm worried that he won't treat him well if it ends up being a boy."

Everyone laughed. "Wouldn't he be disappointed if it was a boy?"

"That's different. Anyway, I'll make sure he loves his son just as much."

"Mommy, it's not a boy. It's a girl... a girl..."

Suddenly, Damian came out of nowhere to correct Clarissa.

Obviously, he refused to accept the fact that he was going to get a brother instead of a sister.

"Hahaha... Damian. What if it's a boy?"

"In that case, we'll send him away."

"Hehe..."

Clarissa quickly corrected him. "Damian, regardless of whether it's a boy or girl, it's part of our family and you will need to love it. It will feel sad if you don't, just like all those children who don't have any parents."

After pondering for a long while, Damian seemed to have resigned himself to reality.

"I understand, Mommy. I will love my sibling no matter the gender. But, I still prefer to have a sister."

"Mmm-hmm. Hopefully."

After that, he suddenly turned around and appeared with a candle in his hand. After lighting it, he made a wish.

"I wish that Mommy will bear a girl, instead of a boy."

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Everyone laughed as they watched the little guy's movements.

Matthew picked up his son and held him in his arms. "It will be a younger sister, not a younger brother. Why would you make such a wish?"

As though he had found an ally, Damian hugged Matthew and said, "Mommy said it might be a younger brother."

Matthew's eyes twitched, fearing that Clarissa already knew the gender of the baby and was keeping it a secret because the child was a son.

Seeing Matthew's reaction, Clarissa couldn't help but laugh.

"I don't know too. Don't be afraid, okay? I want to have a daughter too, but the baby might still be a boy, right? I'm more worried that you both might disown the baby boy."

Matthew let out a sigh of relief. "No, we won't. Didn't you say that you are reacting differently with this pregnancy? Therefore, it will be a different gender?"

Clarissa did not deny it. She was worried that both father and son would start crying if she denied it further.

"Damian, Matt, don't worry, okay? We will pray for you together."

Jeremy cheered together and lit the candles again. Everyone was laughing together, and they all made a wish at the candles.

Clarissa's eyes twitched while the people around her were holding in their laughter and making a wish with their eyes closed.

After wishing and blowing out the candles, they suddenly burst out in laughter. Damian didn't know what was happening, but he laughed together, assuming they were all happy for him to have a new sister.

Clarissa looked at Matthew, and Matthew was speechless as well.

"Enough guys..." Clarissa raised her voice to stop the cheering, but they all said happily, "Don't worry, Clarissa. There are many of us here. God will definitely hear our wishes, and it will be a baby girl."

It was already too late.

Could the baby's gender still be changed?

Clarissa stopped worrying about them. She sat down and started chatting and laughing.

Having achieved such good results in the filming industry, Clarissa felt the need to thank Justin since he put himself in danger to make such a small film. So she toasted with him a glass of fruit juice as gratitude.

Then, she thanked the protagonists and the staff of the filming crew. She was delighted to thank everyone.

Among them, she was the one who contributed the least. Therefore, she really didn't have much credit for her achievement.

However, Yarick exclaimed, "Clarissa, didn't you say that the movie is a gift for Matt?"

Clarissa blushed as she looked toward Matthew. She was embarrassed to say such words in front of so many people.

"Matt, hurry up and let Clarissa confess."

"Confess, confess, confess..."

Everyone started to cheer.

As they cheered, Clarissa's face turned bright red. She wanted to just walk away, but with so many people watching, she couldn't.

Additionally, Matthew was looking at her with passionate eyes, which made Clarissa feel even more embarrassed.

However, Matthew couldn't bear to see her embarrassed, and he immediately glared at the crowd.

Everyone went silent as he walked to Clarissa and hugged her waist. He bent over and kissed her forehead and faced the crowd and said, "Stop cheering. I'm the one who should be confessing, not my wife."

"Yeah! Matt!"

Clarissa became even shyer. She didn't want Matthew to confess in front of a crowd.

However, Matthew seemed to be having a good mood, and he granted the people's wish by turning to Clarissa and affectionately saying, "Clare, I love you-"

"Once is not enough! Say it again!"

"Clare, having you in my life is the greatest gift from God."

"One more time!"

There were still not satisfied, but Matthew looked at Clarissa's blushed face then smiled at the crowd. "I can't say too much. I got to save some for the wedding, right?"

Wedding?

"That's right, Matt. You haven't organized the wedding yet. Or are you secretly preparing it? Fine. Let's stop. We'll hear the rest of it at the wedding."

Clarissa's heart was throbbing quickly, and she was puzzled and shy at the same time.

As though Matthew saw through her, he whispered, "Clare, we've waited four years for the wedding. I've been waiting for you."

Back then, they planned to have their wedding at the small island she owned.

But after four years, the wedding still hadn't happened, but their second child was coming.

She grabbed onto Matthew's large hands and scratched them as if she thought of something.

"Were you anticipating it every year? Were you disappointed every time?"

"That's true!"

Clarissa bit her lip and said, "After the baby is born, I will not let you down again."

That was her promise.

Matthew smiled. "You won't have the chance to let me down. We will have our wedding no matter what."

The atmosphere between the whispering couple was intimate and sweet, making everyone around them jealous.

Roxanne watched from the side. She clenched her fists and pressed them against her chest, feeling exceedingly envious.

Suddenly, Ryler appeared behind her and said, "Are you envious?"

Roxanne was startled by Ryler's voice, and she jumped away in shock to keep a distance from Ryler. Additionally, she was being defensive toward Ryler. "Mr. Cooper, what do you want?"

Ryler raised his eyebrows and said, "Can't we just talk? Are you envious of them?"

Roxanne glanced at Matthew and Clarissa. "I think many people would be envious. I'm just happy for my idol, and I hope that her happiness will last for a lifetime."

"You're quite the loyal fan. But don't you want to be loved and to be happy like Clary?

"Of course, I want to. But there's no hurry for that. I'll just go with the flow."

After a moment of silence, Ryler smiled. "No hurry?"

"Well, yeah. Excuse me. I have to go say hello to Ms. Zaha."

At that time, Roxanne only had her career in mind. She could learn from many seniors there, so she focused her attention on them and naturally ignored Ryler.

Daniel looked at Ryler and walked over to him with a glass of wine in his hand. He asked, "Do you really like this girl, huh? Isn't she a bit too young?"

Ryler kept quiet and didn't to answer.

Daniel knew Ryler very well. They have been friends for years. Back then, he stopped Ryler from loving Clarissa. Now that Ryler had become famous, he didn't have to worry about his love life affecting his career anymore. However, he had also become older. Hence, he didn't stop Ryler anymore, but Ryler's life had been quiet.

But Ryler seemed to have a chance with Roxanne, and he sometimes paid attention to her.

However, his intentions were always vague due to his indecisive attitude.

"She hasn't graduated yet. After she graduates, I presume that she will be ambitious in her career. If you really like her, you still have to wait. But with your current age, how long more can you wait? Won't you be too old by then?" Daniel tried not to ridicule him.

However, Ryler remained expressionless. He didn't admit it nor deny it.

Fine, stay quiet then.

Daniel got tired of his attitude and decided to leave him alone. After all, he was the person who brought trauma to his previous romantic conquest.

Huh... Daniel sipped his wine in misery.

While Henry was still trying to coax Yaala about the benefits of having a baby, Roxanne jumped in and interrupted their conversation.

Henry was worried about his aging self and his incompetence in persuading his wife.

He too, sipped on his wine miserably.

On the other hand, Luke watched the romantic chemistry between Clarissa and Matthew. The wine in his mouth started to turn bitter as the smile on his face gradually turned sinister. After looking at the young Roxanne and Yaala, he pondered the possibility of flirting with them.

Then, he picked up his wine glass and went to flirt with the two beauties.

Yaala and Roxanna have heard of Luke's messy private life. So, they didn't particularly like him.

However, Luke was persistent. After all, he just wanted to relieve his boredom.

But after just a few words into the conversation, both his shoulders were suddenly pinned by two men.

Henry pinned his left shoulder while Ryler pinned his right. He turned his head left and right to look at both of them. Their expressions were bleak.

Luke smiled. Great.

He had already been hammered by someone else's display of affection today, and now he was about to receive another blow from these two men.

Damn it. Why is everyone tormenting me?

He really didn't want to be tormented like this today.

"Yes? Mr. Jackson? Mr. Cooper? Is there a problem? If it's nothing, then please don't intervene in my conversation with these two beauties!"

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"What conversation? Yaala is my woman."

"Sure, but what about Roxanne?" Luke pouted.

He looked at Ryler as Ryler frigidly said, "Roxanna is my woman."

"Who's your woman now?" Roxanne blushed and retorted.

However, Ryler looked at Roxanne with a half-smile. "Are you not?"

They were a couple in the movie, right?

"That- That's a movie. It's not real."

Luke smirked. "Mr. Cooper, you must be really dedicated to your craft. But please don't perform it here. Roxanne is a cutie, and I truly want to pursue her. I don't know if I will succeed, but I'm happy as long as she gives me a chance." Luke expressed his intentions to Roxanne.

Roxanne's eyes were wide open. She was startled by the sudden confession which wasn't a normal occasion for her.

As for Ryler, his facial expression change and he looked at Luke coldly.

He turned toward Roxanne. Naturally, he knew he had no right to control who Roxanne liked, but the way he looked at her was somewhat threatening.

"Roxanne, do you want him to pursue you? Hmm?" Ryler's tone sounded as if Luke would eat her up if she were to accept him. He was threatening her in broad daylight.

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Roxanne could only succumb to Ryler's obvious threat.

She immediately shook her head vigorously and said, "Mr. Harrison, I don't like you. Don't pursue me."

As a matter of fact, even if Ryler didn't threaten her, she wouldn't accept Luke's pursuit.

But now, in the eyes of others, her behavior seemed to imply that she had a relationship with Ryler, but she didn't realize it.

However, when Roxanne rejected Luke, a faint smile flashed across Ryler's face.

He grinned at Luke and said, "Mr. Harrison. As Roxanne said, you-"

"It's okay. Roxanne doesn't know me yet. We will get to know more about each other in the future. Roxanne, although I used to be a playboy, I have a feeling that I will love you wholeheartedly when we are a couple." After saying that, Luke didn't press on any further.

But Ryler's expression turned grim again. He was worried about Roxanne.

He turned toward Roxanne, but Roxanne pulled herself back out of fright. She didn't dare to look at Ryler. However, her action seemed to have made her look guilty in the eyes of others.

An ominous aura flashed across Ryler's eyes.

However, it was best not to cause any disputes at such a moment. Ryler didn't come over to help Roxanne. In fact, he wasn't even sure why he felt jumpy because of Roxanne.

After Ryler turned around and left, Roxanne let out a long sigh and quickly went to look for Damian to calm herself.

Everyone present who witnessed the moment saw the chemistry between Ryler and Roxanne very well. After all, the eyes of bystanders were always clearer.

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The commotion amused Clarissa. She grabbed onto Matthew's finger and whispered, "Are you men really that cheap? Not knowing the importance of a woman until she is being pursued by someone else?"

Matthew's eyes turned cold. "Not me. I knew how important you were to me right from the beginning."

"Is that so? Then, who was it that didn't make up with me for so long after an argument?" Clarissa pouted.

"You were the one giving me the silent treatment," Matthew sneered.

Clarissa remained silent for a moment before rubbing her forehead. "Oh, I don't remember doing that. I seem to have a bad memory." Clarissa used her pregnancy as an excuse to play dumb.

Matthew smiled in a doting manner as he watched her walk away while playing dumb.

The celebration did not last long because Clarissa was prone to experience fatigue due to her pregnancy.

Clarissa went to bed early as a pregnant woman. Everyone was considerate and left after hanging out for some time.

However, they gathered outside for another session.

They also invited a few people from the media to share their achievements, which was also Yael's idea of annoying Shermaine.

Shermaine deliberately shot a lousy film to irritate them, so they should be allowed to celebrate their achievements to get back at her.

When the press release was published, Shermaine was the first to see it. However, like Clarissa, she learned to remain silent and did nothing.

Both parties were temporarily quiet for a while, each minding their business, and nothing happened to either one of them.

Clarissa was content with the achievements and settled down to prepare for labor.

After enduring the scorching summer and the cool autumn, Clarissa's belly had grown bigger. Just as winter was about to come, the family came together to face the final hurdle of childbirth.

Clarissa's due date was approaching quickly. Matthew took off from work since Clarissa became pregnant, and he returned to work in the middle few months when Clarissa's pregnancy became stable. But when she was about to give birth, Matthew took leave from work gain.

Back when Damian was born, Matthew wasn't always by her side. Therefore, he never actually see Clarissa's struggle during her pregnancy.

Having personally accompanied her, he truly understood how hard it was for Clarissa to bear a baby. Thus, he decided not to have another baby anymore whether the newborn baby was a son or a daughter.

He truly didn't want any more children and went for a vasectomy several months ago.

At that time, Clarissa disagreed, but Matthew secretly went for the surgery, and Clarissa wasn't sure if she should feel angry or touched by his actions.

Now that he has sterilized himself, Clarissa made peace with the outcome and was satisfied with having two children.

In the past few days, she was admitted to a pre-arranged hospital and tended to around the clock, and Matthew stayed with her and made sure she never left his sight.

Clarissa felt helpless due to his restlessness. She had to console her husband even when she was preparing for childbirth.

"Matthew, you don't have to be so nervous. The doctor says that my body and the baby are in good condition. I have given birth to a child before, so there will be no complications this time. Relax. Your anxiousness is making me and the baby feel nervous. Can't you learn from Damian? He's just calmly waiting for his sister to be born. He even prepared gifts for his newborn sister."

"I'm not nervous." Matthew smiled apathetically.

"Hmph! I don't believe that."

"By the way, when I give birth, you are not allowed to enter the delivery room, do you understand? I won't allow it."

Clarissa had emphasized this too many times. Matthew tried to reason with her and wanted to accompany her to the delivery room.

However, after Clarissa refused him several times, Matthew changed his mind and promised that he wouldn't go in with her.

But Clarissa was afraid that Matthew would go in nonetheless. She didn't want Matthew to witness her hysterical side as she worried she might traumatize him.

Matthew nodded obediently to coax her.

"Okay. I won't go in."

Clarissa wondered why Matthew sounded indifferent.

She glared at Matthew sideways and snorted, "If you go in, I won't give birth to the baby."

"No. I won't..."

He held her hands and went for a walk together in the garden at the hospital.

In his heart, Matthew recalled what the doctor told him about the process of giving birth, as well as the documentaries he watched about giving birth. He knew that he wouldn't

be traumatized, but the thought of his wife giving birth the same way tore him apart as though he was the one giving birth to a baby.

Being a mother is not easy. It is a noble role of humanity.

Catherine was left at home alone when Clarissa's due date was nearing.

She wanted to meet her granddaughter, but Clarissa refused. Catherine was too old and had limited mobility. Clarissa was afraid that she would be nervous, so she had her stay at home alone.

However, Catherine was not nervous at all. In fact, her granddaughter was treated like a queen. The doctors would check on her every day, and it was also her second child. Thus, Catherine didn't insist on following her to the hospital.

But that was when Clarissa made her worst mistake.

"Mrs. Quigley, Mrs. Tyson called this morning when you weren't awake. She told me to report to you that she wasn't expected to give birth today."

Jenny told Catherine about Clarissa's condition while she helped her to her breakfast.

Catherine chuckled. "That girl. There's no need to report to me every day. I'm not as nervous as Matthew. He isn't experienced in this matter after all. But most people sure are spoiled nowadays. We didn't have this kind of treatment when we were giving birth back in the days!"

"That's because Mrs. Tyson's husband loves her very much."

"Yeah. That was unexpected of Matthew. He has been so kind to Clary. As her grandmother, I must thank him."

"If you were to thank him, he wouldn't be able to accept it."

The two of them had a friendly chat over breakfast.

Jenny watched as Catherine sat quietly in the living room. When the sun came out, Jenny went to work on her chores.

At this moment, Catherine's phone rang. She fumbled to put on her reading glasses and swiped on her phone.

Her fingers weren't very agile. After putting the phone to her ear, she greeted hello a few times.

Usually, her old friends were the only ones who would call her or video conference with her. However, she heard the voice of a young girl from the other side of the phone.

"Mrs. Quigley, my name is Shermaine. You might have or haven't heard about me before, but that's not important. I have something particularly important to tell you."

After Jenny cleaned the room upstairs, she went downstairs. That was when she heard...

"Aaaahh! Someone-"

Catherine was lying on the floor. She wasn't sure if she had passed out, but her face was pale, and her body was motionless.

In her room, Clarissa repeated muttered, "You must absolutely not go in. If you go in, I won't give birth to the baby. Also, I'm being serious, Matthew. Stop responding to me so indifferently!"

Matthew smiled helplessly. He stood up and strolled with Clarissa while supporting her waist with his hands.

"Clare, I promised you. Why won't you believe me?"

"Because I am afraid that you might go in on your own. I don't want you to see how ugly I look-"

"Ugly? How could you be ugly? You will always be beautiful-"

"How can I believe you when you say it like that?"

"Haha... Let me put it another way. You worked so hard to give birth to our baby. How could I despise you? If I really do despise you, that means I have a problem as a human being. Do you think I am that kind of person?"

"I know you won't despise me, but I can't do this. If you don't want to upset me, then you must not go in with me."

"Okay. I swear. I won't go in. I'll wait for you outside, okay?"

Clarissa nodded in delight. "That's more like it."

Then, she meticulously stroked her belly and said, "This second child is really taking its time. I'm worried that it might be a lazy baby. Think about it, when I was pregnant, I was sluggish all the time. That was when I suspected that it might be a lazy baby. Now that it's already past the due date, I honestly think it's a lazy one. Look, it turns around leisurely, and she won't even kick me more than once."

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Matthew picked up the phone as Clarissa continued muttering to herself.

He picked it up in front of her since it was merely a call from Julia. Up until then, he had no idea something had gone wrong at Zen Highlands.

"Mrs. Lawson?"

The moment Clarissa turned around, she caught a glimpse of Matthew frowning. As a result, her heart skipped a beat as well.

Matthew returned to her side and helped her up seeing that she tried to get up from her seat.

"Alright, keep me updated if there's anything else."

Immediately after Matthew hung up the call, Clarissa asked with her eyes brimming, "Is something wrong with Grandma? I want you to tell me the truth!"

Matthew suppressed his emotions and helped the woman next to him up. "Clare, you need to stay calm since it's almost time you give birth."

"H-Has something bad happened to Grandma?"

He responded with a nod and added, "Grandma passed out all of a sudden. As of now, she has been rushed to the hospital. You need to stay calm since Mrs. Lawson is there to look after her. Meanwhile, you-"

Clarissa stopped him from finishing his sentence and asked while stepping forward, "Where is she? We'll head over to the hospital at once!"

The man held her in his arms and asserted, "No! You're not allowed to head to the hospital since you require medical attention as well!"

She turned around and stared at him in the eyes with her pair of welled-up eyes, indicating she was determined to make her way to her grandmother's side.

Aware of the things the determined woman had in mind, he announced, "Alright, if that's the case, I'll bring you to the hospital. Are you sure you're fine?"

"I'm sure our daughter knows it's not time for her to see us just yet! We need to hurry up and get going!"

Matthew lifted Clarissa in his arms and brought her out of the ward, ignoring the doctor's advice.

After they boarded the car, he instructed Donnie to get the doctor from that hospital ready for Clarissa's labor as a safety countermeasure.

On their way to the hospital, Matthew ensured Clarissa everything would be fine because he was afraid her emotions would affect their daughter.

At the very least, their daughter seemed to be aware of the things going on and stopped making a fuss throughout their way to the hospital.

The moment they reached the hospital, Matthew brought Clarissa upstairs and joined Julia and the chauffeur outside of the operating theater.

Julia wailed the moment the duo showed up, "I'm so sorry! It must have been my fault!"

Matthew consoled the weeping woman and asked, "Julia, why don't you stop blaming yourself and tell us Grandma's condition?"

Wiping her tears dry, Julia stammered, "The doctor said it might be acute myocardial infarction."

Overwhelmed by tidal waves of emotions, Clarissa started weeping and queried in return, "How is that possible when Grandma has just gone through a series of checkups and she's fine?"

Julia shook her head and answered, "I have no idea as well. We have just made it to the hospital a few minutes ago."

The director of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology showed up when he found out Matthew was there.

"Mrs. Tyson, you need to stay calm for the sake of your child."

Although they had been trying their best to console the worried Clarissa, she just couldn't calm herself when the life of her loved one was at stake.

There was no way Clarissa, who had always been such a caring person, could turn a blind eye on her grandmother.

She thought she had gotten herself ready to bid farewell to her grandmother. However, she couldn't take it when she found out that Catherine might pass on due to complications of her physical condition.

Therefore, no one, not even Matthew's advice, could reach her since she had shut everyone out of her life because of her grandmother's condition.

With that being said, they were just glad Clarissa's condition was fine in spite of being overly worked up over her grandmother's condition.

Halfway through the tedious session, Clarissa grasped Matthew's arm with all her might and her face scrunched up in pain.

"What's wrong, Clare?"

The moment the onlookers heard Matthew, they surrounded the duo.

Before Clarissa couldn't even tell Matthew her condition, the doctor marched out of the operating theater out of the blue.

The doctor was startled by the presence of the people outside of the operation theatre.

Seconds after he had his mask removed, Clarissa and Matthew rushed over and asked, "Doctor, is my grandmother fine?

The doctor shook his head with an apologetic look. "I'm so sorry for letting you down, but we have tried our best to save her."

"M-Mrs. Tyson!"

"C-Clare! Get a stretcher over at once!"

Things got increasingly chaotic in front of the operating theater. Thankfully, Matthew had long gotten the doctor ready for Clarissa's labor.

Therefore, they rushed the unconscious woman to the operating theater without further ado.

"Mr. Tyson, Mrs. Tyson is about to deliver, but she's still unconscious due to the bad news. If she remains unconscious, we'll have to carry on with cesarean delivery."

"Alright! What about my wife? Is she going to be fine? If her life is at stake, I want you to keep her safe even if it comes at the cost of the life of our daughter!"

Afraid the intimidated man would lose his cool soon, the doctor mustered his courage and said, "Mr. Tyson, you need to say calm. As of now, things are still under control."

"What do you mean as of now?"

"I-I mean things will turn out just fine!"

"Mr. Tyson, you need to stop picking on the doctor. It's time for him to get going for Mrs. Tyson's surgical procedures."

Donnie stopped Matthew from going berserk and assisted Matthew in signing the agreements to carry on with the surgical procedures.

Their daughter was delivered within a short while due to cesarean delivery. He merely glanced at their child as he couldn't care less about their child's gender. Julia took the baby away and brought her to the caretakers.

Meanwhile, Matthew insisted on waiting for Clarrisa outside the operating theater.

He could barely resist the urge to barge into the operating theater due to the countless horrifying thoughts he had in mind.

Matthew was never a religious person. However, it was at that moment he thought he wouldn't mind praying to deities capable of keeping his wife safe.

Clarissa's mind was all over the place the moment she regained consciousness. She finally recalled the things she had gone through as soon as she felt the void deep down.

"Grandma..."

"Clare, I'm always here for you! Just take it easy and stop holding yourself accountable, okay? Grandma has always been proud of you and your sprightly self! I'm sure she doesn't want you to suffer because of her!"

However, Matthew could talk any sense into the dejected Clarissa. Thus, she continued to cry.

The wailing infant was the one bringing Clarissa back to her senses. When Julia showed up with the little girl, she announced with her eyes brimming, "Mrs. Tyson, your baby girl needs you as much as you need your grandmother."

Clarissa gaped at the presence of their daughter as she couldn't even recall delivering her daughter.

"Clare, I'm sure Grandma is glad you have been blessed with a daughter! Why don't you go ahead and try holding her in your arms?"

"0-0kay."

Clarissa wasn't against the suggestion and held her daughter in her arms. Nonetheless, she needed others to be around her since she was still relatively frail.

The little girl finally stopped making a scene when she caught a whiff of her mother's scent and figured out she was in great hands.

Clarissa leaned over and started feeding her daughter breastmilk. She had an ample supply of breastmilk for the little girl after spending such a long time taking care of herself throughout her pregnancy.

The little girl had a great time savoring her mother's breastmilk and stopped crying. She continued sucking in silence instead of wailing.

Staring at the little girl in her arms, Clarissa felt a sense of relief as much as she was heartbroken.

Julia urged, "Mrs. Tyson, you need to pull yourself together for your daughter's sake. Otherwise, she's going to starve without you. I'm sure Mrs. Quigley doesn't want you to suffer because of her. As a matter of fact, she must be proud to have you as her granddaughter. I guess this is the best out of the worst possible outcomes."

Clarissa thought about her late grandmother while staring at the newborn in her arms. She assured Julia, "I'll be fine. I just need some time."

"Well, I guess it takes time."

Clarissa finally raised her head and looked at the pale and haggard Matthew. He seemed to have aged over the night after being worried for such a long time.

She stretched her hand and clasped their fingers together. "Matthew, thank you so much."

He was unable to resist the urge to kiss her hand. Seconds after he returned to his senses, he warned her, "You need to stop giving me such shock."

"I'll stop trying anything silly in the future. Also, please take care of Grandma's funeral on my behalf."

"You don't even have to bring it. Just relax as I will take care of everything."

"Once I'm discharged, we'll bring her remains back to W City. I'm pretty sure she wishes to be buried next to my father."

"As soon as you're discharged, we'll make a trip to W City as a family of four and send Grandma home!"

Torrents of grief streamed down Clarissa's cheeks once again. However, she beamed in satisfaction when she saw their daughter in her arms.

Although her grandmother had passed on, her daughter had finally joined her family.

She was no longer alone since she had her family members with her. Her husband and children would be the mainstay of her life from now onwards.

.....

Clarissa finally made her way home after spending a week in the hospital.

The journalists had been camping outside of the hospital ever since they got their hands on the news of the newborn of the Tysons.

They wished to capture a photo to figure out the gender of the newborn of the family. However, their effort was to no avail since Matthew did a great job keeping his loved ones safe.

The persistent ones sneaked their way into the hospital by leveraging their relationship with their relatives working in the hospital. Unfortunately, they weren't even allowed to show up on the level of Clarissa's ward.

In the end, those affiliated with the journalists were terminated from the hospital.

They continued waiting until Clarissa was discharged from the hospital, but the photos of the departing car were the only things they had acquired.

Speculations were all over the place for a few days. Although none could verify the source of the news, the public had a great time gossiping.

After Matthew brought his wife and daughter back to the nursery room and instructed his son to keep an eye on them, he made his way to the study and engaged in a conversation with Donnie.

"We have gotten our hands on someone with the name of Gary. He's Shermaine's half-brother with a different mother."

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Shermaine has a half-brother of a different mother? Hilary must have fallen for Clarissa's father when she was pregnant!

On top of that, she had a different affair with another man after getting married to Clarissa's father! In other words, she had conceived Shermaine during her affair with another man when she was engaged to Clarissa's father!

Shermaine's father was merely a thug back in the day. However, he was lucky to have acquired a fortune over the night. Hence, he couldn't be bothered by his affair with Hilary since he had started a family with another woman.

It turns out Shermaine was never a member of the Quigleys! Hilary wouldn't have thought her so-called daughter was the daughter of the thug she deemed unrelated at all.

Maybe she was aware of the truth but made up her mind to keep everyone in the dark for her sake.

Shermaine is such a disgusting woman! I can't believe she's a fan of incest with her half-brother!

"We have gotten everything under control and taken those involved into custody. Therefore, they're not suspicious of anything at the moment."

Matthew nodded and instructed, "Keep this confidential from Clare for the time being. I don't want anyone or anything to get in her way and cause her any trouble."

"Alright."

Matthew was afraid others would mess around with Clarissa. He was glad their daughter was around to keep her occupied. Therefore, he needed to keep her in the dark to ensure she had adequate rest.

As long as Clarissa was home, Matthew would keep her safe at all costs in spite of things spiraling out of control out there.

Seconds after Donnie excused himself and departed, Matthew made his way to the nursery room and found out their daughter had fallen asleep in Clarissa's arms.

He grinned when he saw his wife and son beaming in the presence of their daughter.

He approached his family with a gentle smile and thought he was lucky to have been blessed with such a happy family.

The little girl, who was not much different from a chunk of meat, seemed to have morphed into an adorable infant over the night.

The little girl was blessed with ethereal-looking facial features and resembled the gorgeous Clarissa a lot.

She had relatively fair skin as compared to her peers. It was evident she would turn into a woman as gorgeous as her mother in the future.

Matthew, who had always wanted a daughter, never had the chance to hold the little girl in his arms because he was afraid of hurting her.

After all, she wasn't even the size of his forearm. He was afraid he would easily injure her had he failed to stop himself from exercising his strength.

On top of that, he had been quite occupied with all sorts of things since the time they were still at the hospital. Thus, he thought of going along with the flow.

It was the first time the thought of holding his daughter in his arms crossed his mind. Nonetheless, he was afraid he would accidentally bruise her with his coarse fingers.

In the end, he inched away the moment he stretched his arms in an attempt to reach her.

Clarissa chuckled and teased, "You need to stop being afraid of hurting her. Otherwise, you'll just have to stay away from her until she has grown bigger."

Matthew leaned over and hesitated even after Clarissa assured him it would be fine. He was also afraid of rousing their daughter from sleep.

Out of the blue, Damian held his father's hand and whispered, "Daddy, she's so small and adorable!"

"You're not allowed to pinch her, okay?"

Damian was irked by his father's remark. He pouted his lips in an aggrieved manner and announced, "Daddy, there's no way I'll be pinching her!"

Chuckling, Clarissa remarked, "Both of you need to stop being overly cautious around her."

The duo nodded in a goofy manner and took note of Clarissa's instructions.

She chuckled and asked, "Speaking of which, have you thought of her name?"

Matthew had been racking his brain for the suitable name for their daughter.

It wasn't much of a challenge to think of a name, but he just couldn't think of a suitable one since he had high hopes for her.

"Mommy, shall we name her Coco since she's so adorable?"

Clarissa found his son hilarious and asked in return, "Is that the only reason you're going to name her Coco?"

"Yes! It sounds like an adorable name befitting my adorable sister!"

Matthew rebuked with his lips twitching against his will, "No!"

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"If that's the case, I'll sort out her nickname and get you to name her, Matthew."

"Sure, what sort of nickname have you thought of?"

"Leia."

Her husband's confusion was written all over his face. He asked, "Can you tell me the reason behind her nickname?"

"Well, since the name carries the definition of languid, don't you think it's the perfect description for our little sloth over here? Has she ever been awake for anything else apart from eating?"

Damian and Matthew exchanged glances as they were at a loss for words to rebuke Clarissa's statements.

The father and son duo also thought it wouldn't be wise to turn her down. Thus, they announced with a nod, "Alright, Leia it is!"

Therefore, the little girl was officially named with a unique name. Thankfully, it was just a nickname of hers. Otherwise, others might make fun of her in the future.

"Leia!"

Clarissa continued addressing the little girl in an intimate manner as if she couldn't care less about others' opinions.

••••

Shermaine took a detour to several locations before heading over to the designated destination to meet Gary in person.

Usually, they would meet one another in the middle of the night. Unable to suppress her excitement anymore, she asked him to meet her at the hotel in the middle of the day.

As soon as he made it to the outskirt of D City, she got herself disguised before making her way to the hotel.

The moment she stepped into the room, Gary showed up behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist. Shermaine burst out laughing since she was in a great mood.

They engaged themselves in another raunchy session that lasted for a long time. In the end, the exhausted duo nestled against one another on the bed.

Gary lit a cigarette for himself, but Shermaine took it away from him and started puffing away.

The man ran his hands across her body and asked nonchalantly, "You're finally on cloud nine, huh? How are you going to return the favor since I have gone to great lengths to help you?"

"Haven't I just returned the favor?" Shermaine asked with her brows arched.

"You don't think that's enough to please me, do you?"

"Well, what else do you want from me?"

"Don't you think it's too much of a hassle to manage a company? Why don't you let me help you?"

Shermaine chuckled and announced, "Just be frank if you wish to get your hands on the company! To be honest, I don't mind handing it over to you at all!"

"Oh? Are you serious? Well, I guess you're not against the idea since it doesn't belong to you either! Thanks in advance!"

"I don't mind handing it over to you, but there's no way I'm surrendering everything to you. I need to keep a portion of ownership over the company for myself."

"What do you mean? You can always count on me!"

"I'm so sorry, but there's no way I'm having faith in someone as unreliable as you."

"At the end of the day, it's up to you! Speaking of which, isn't James the rightful owner of the company? How are you going to get your hands on it? There's no way I'm waiting for you to inherit the company! I want it as soon as possible!"

"Just give me a few weeks to sort things out."

"Alright, I'll be looking forward to hearing from you soon."

Shermaine had her fair share of doubts and asked Gary, "Are you sure you have successfully carried out the plan and swapped the little girl?"

"Can you have a little faith in your brother? Has anyone mentioned anything about the authenticity of the DNA test? Just take it easy!"

"Have you gotten rid of the baby girl?"

"Have I not told you to take it easy? I have long disposed of her!"

Once Gary assured her he had everything sorted out, Shermaine responded with a vicious grin.

A few seconds later, she glared at the man and asked, "Where have you disposed of her? I need to know her precise location! I can't risk others rushing to her rescue!"

"My sister is such a vicious woman! However, you don't have to worry since I have asked them to throw her in the woods on the outskirts! I don't think others will show up in the woods for no reason! She'll be long dead by the time someone shows up! Why don't you go ahead and give it a try? I'm pretty sure you're going to end up seeing a little girl's corpse!"

Shermaine gave it a thought and burst out laughing once again.

"It's not worth my time! I'm just glad there's nothing they can do to turn the tables around even if they're aware their so-called daughter isn't their daughter! Hahaha!"

Gary started shivering in fear as the woman next to her laughed at the top of her lungs, gloating over others' misfortune.

I guess it's not an exaggeration when others claim women tend to be the most vicious beings on earth! This woman next to me has just brought upon an old woman's demise in front of me a few days ago! Instead of showing any signs of remorse, she burst out laughing in content!

The man wasn't aware Shermaine's plan was far more complicated than it might have seen. It turned out she had taken everyone's response into consideration.

She was certain Clarissa would rush her way to Catherine's side and had everything sorted out with those affiliated with the hospital. In other words, they had been dancing to her tune ever since the beginning of Catherine's demise.

Gary was aware Shermaine was thrown behind bars after the failed attempt to take Clarissa out three years ago. It turned out she had gotten better with plotting against others after being set free.

She would no longer make any rash decisions without proper contingency plans in store for unforeseen circumstances.

On top of that, she had gotten better with her acts and managed to deceive everyone apart from Gary.

He got increasingly aroused the more he thought about the woman next to her. His urge to get his hands on her got stronger than ever.

Thus, he got on top of her and started another raunchy session without asking for her consent.

To his surprise, Shermaine played along with him instead of reprimanding him. Thrilled, she had a great time after putting on an act for such a long time.

The pleasure had transcended beyond physical sensation, especially when she recalled Clarissa wasn't aware her so-called daughter wasn't her daughter. She just couldn't wait to share the truth with them and turn the life of the happy family upside down.

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Unfortunately, Shermaine would never get to execute her seemingly flawless plan.

Someone knocked on the door of their room early in the morning after the duo had a wild and raunchy night.

Gary, who happened to be topless, was roused from his sleep. Immediately after he answered the door, a bunch of strangers barged into their room with cameras.

They made their way to Shermaine's direction and captured the photo of the topless woman. As soon as she was roused from her sleep, her mind was all over the place. Thus, she ended up shrieking and yelling in fear.

Within half an hour, the embarrassing photos made it to the internet and took the netizens by storm. In spite of the photos being censored due to legal concerns, those who had uploaded the photos didn't bother to censor Shermaine's face.

Shermaine's life was the one that had been turned upside down over the night. After making it to the headlines, she became the talk of the town within a few hours.

It was evident Matthew had been pulling the strings behind the scenes.

The sort of messed-up relationship she had with Gary made it to the headlines as well.

The incidents involving Clarissa had been published; the secrets those from the upper echelon had been keeping to themselves unfolded in front of the public.

It turned out the two ladies were swapped by their heartless mother when they were young. To make things worse for Clarissa, her selfish mother accused her of countless things prior to her death. Clarissa had refrained from sharing the truth just to keep her loved ones safe. Meanwhile, Shermaine, who was aware of the truth, had been indulging herself instead of confessing the truth.

Although the details of Shermaine's crimes had been omitted, the whistleblower had included the part Shermaine was the one behind most of Clarissa's misfortune.

However, those aware of the truth had been sharing the details with the curious crowd, including Shermaine's countless vicious plots.

Judy, who was involved in swapping the babies, was found dead in her village. The murderer was nowhere to be found. Nonetheless, the evidence the police had gathered indicated Gary and Shermaine were the masterminds.

The celebrities who had made fun of Shermaine had fallen victim to accidents one after another. Some of them almost lost their lives as a result.

Shermaine's personal assistant, who had been staying away from Shermaine just because she was afraid of Shermaine, was violated by a bunch of men on her way home.

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The various vicious plots of Shermaine had exposed her true colors. The public finally figured out she had been putting on an act ever since she was set free.

Worst of all, she had an active incest relationship with her half-brother of a different mother. They thought she didn't deserve a second chance and started a witch hunt revolving around her.

Nonetheless, there wasn't much the netizen could do since they would have to leave the rest to the judge.

As soon as their scandals made it to the headline, the police showed up at the hotel. Someone had tipped them off that Shermaine and Gary were the masterminds behind several murder cases.

Shermaine had no clue what actually happened when she was escorted into the police car.

She insisted on reaching out to her parents and getting herself an attorney to defend her the moment she reached the police station.

Unfortunately, James would no longer show his so-called daughter any mercy.

"James, you can't leave Shermaine alone because of the baseless accusations! She's our daughter! You have to do something to save her!"

"Shut up!"

It was the first time in forever James raised his volume against his wife. He asked in return, "What do you mean those are merely baseless accusations? Have you not seen the photos? I-I can't believe..."

He couldn't even bring himself to finish the sentence.

On the other hand, Kayla had her doubts and insisted, "Maybe someone has edited those photos! James, I'm sure you know Shermaine as well as I do!"

"Those might be edited, but what about the time she tried to embezzle the funds of the company? I have the transaction records proving her guilty!"

James showed his wife the stack of documents that had been sent to his doorstep immediately after Shermaine was taken away by the police.

He almost passed out due to wrath upon a simple glimpse at the transaction record. Unable to prove those had been forged, he couldn't believe his beloved daughter was the one behind his undoing.

Who the hell is this so-called daughter of mine? There's no way I'm rushing to her rescue even if she hadn't tried to bring upon my undoing! There's no way this is just another mere coincidence!

I just can't believe she's trying to take Clarissa out again! Worst of all, she's having an incest relationship with Gary, his half-brother! There's no way I'm acknowledging her as my daughter ever!

Kayla had faith in Shermaine and refused to believe her daughter had committed the sins. She yelled, "No, James! I'm sure someone has forged these!"

"Shut up!"

James' wrath was written all over his face. He glared at his wife in the eyes and thought she was the one at fault for spoiling Shermaine over the years.

I'm afraid it's over for me as well! Since Shermaine's destined to be doomed, there's no way Clarissa, who has never shown any signs of acknowledging us as her parents, will return to us!

Seconds after he gathered his thoughts, James turned around and was about to leave, but Kayla stopped him in an attempt to beg him to do their daughter a favor.

Unable to withstand her unreasonable request anymore, James forbade Kayla from leaving the house.

"None of you are allowed to set her free without my permission! Also, get rid of all the communication devices! I'll terminate those who defy my instructions as well!"

Kayla ended up weeping over and over again. There was nothing she could do to save her so-called innocent daughter.

On the other hand, James sent someone to check on Shermaine's situation. However, he couldn't care less and stopped poking his nose into Shermaine's business as much as she wished to request an audience with him.

....

Although things were chaotic due to the scandals, that wasn't the case for those at Zen Highlands.

Clarissa held Leia in her arms and stood next to the window for their daily sunbathing session. She thought Leia was the perfect name for their indolent daughter.

Although most of the newborns would spend a majority of their time sleeping, there were at least a few hours they would be awake.

However, the little girl in her arms had no interest to explore the world. She would merely make a fuss whenever she was hungry or when her diaper was wet.

As long as she had the little girl's needs taken care of, she would behave herself. Therefore, Clarissa thought it wasn't such a bad idea to have such a slothful daughter since it would make her life easier.

After all, she had gone through hell with Damian during the first few months he was born.

The little girl furrowed her brows when she felt her mother running her fingers across her chin. It was evident she had yet to fall asleep.

"Leia, why are you such a slothful little girl?"

Her daughter remained silent.

"I'm afraid you're not allowed to remain as slothful as such once you're a grown-up! Otherwise, it's such a waste of your gorgeous look!"

Clarissa was slightly bored since she had to keep herself entertained without others around her.

Matthew had made his way to W City with Catherine's remains and brought Damian along with him.

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Initially, she thought of tagging along with the father and son duo, but she knew it wasn't time for her to make such an exhaustive trip just yet. As she didn't want to stall the ritual anymore, she asked Matthew to send her grandmother back to W City on her behalf.

Apart from Julia and a few caregivers to look after her, there was no one around to keep her company.

Although Ellie had volunteered to take care of Clarissa on behalf of Matthew when he wasn't around, she was still sleeping soundly when it was almost noon.

When Ellie showed up, Clarissa started teasing her daughter in an attempt to make fun of her so-called niece.

"Leia, can you wake up to keep me company? Leia! Hello?"

Aware of the things Clarissa had in mind, Ellie announced with her lips twitching, "They spend most of their time sleeping to induce growth. Are you bearing the consequences of her delay in growth, if there's any?"

Clarissa snorted when she heard Ellie. She remarked in a sarcastic manner, "She's not even asleep! I'm pretty sure she's just trying to ignore me!"

Ellie approached the duo and leaned over to catch a glimpse of her cousin. The thought of giving birth crossed her mind at that particular moment.

I hope she grows up soon! I'll get her a lot of dresses and doll her up with different styles! On top of that, I can get her a lot of other things!

"Leia, when are you going to grow up and join me for a shopping trip? I'll get you everything you need in the future! I have found so many adorable clothes and bags for you, but I can't get them since you won't be able to use them!"

"You must be kidding me, aren't you? Speaking of which, when are you getting married? Why don't you save up for your daughter instead?"

"Me? There's no way I'm giving birth! I'm pretty sure it hurts a lot!"

"Well, it certainly hurts a lot, but don't you long for companion of a daughter?"

Ellie went dead silent since she was slightly against the idea. After much consideration, she announced while shaking her head, "We'll talk about this again because there's no way I'm giving birth in the near future."

Clarissa had no intention to poke her nose into Ellie's relationship with Shawn since she thought it wouldn't be wise.

They continued discussing all sorts of random topics and refrained from talking about Shermaine when the person of interest hadn't stopped making it to the headlines ever since the scandal.

Truth be told, Matthew had forbidden them from bringing up those in front of Clarissa prior to his departure to W City.

It was only a matter of time until Clarissa found out the truth, but he thought it just wasn't the time since she was in the middle of recovery.

Meanwhile, Clarissa had no intention to figure out the things ongoing because her daughter was her only concern.

She was just glad to have the little girl next to her and thought she needed nothing else in life.

Grandma might have sent Leia to me to keep me company. If that's the case, I can't possibly let her down. I have to take good care of Leia on behalf of Grandma.

I guess I need to consider ourselves lucky since Leia is also the family's sweetheart, including her father and brother.

Actually, she was the family's sweetheart on the day we found out I was pregnant. I think she's going to get everything her way in the future when she grows up.

With that being said, there's nothing much she can do as of now. I mean, she doesn't even want to talk to me.

Clarissa's speculations were spot on as her little girl turned into a slothful woman who would spend most of her time doing nothing in the future.

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Clarissa spent a month and a half at home since it was one of her late grandmother's instructions.

As Catherine was afraid that Clarissa might have to undergo cesarean delivery, she insisted on having her granddaughter take a longer break since it was winter.

Clarissa took note of her late grandmother's instruction and ensured she did nothing but get ample for a month and a half.

A month and a half later, she made her way to W City with her children. She was overwhelmed by the desolate scene the moment she returned to the place she once considered home.

The person she loved the most was nowhere to be seen anymore. However, she had no intention of getting rid of the place.

She thought that would be their home whenever they made their way to W City in the future.

It was part of her plan to bring her children there during their semester break. She wanted them to know how it would feel growing up on the suburbs.

"Shall we take a short break?"

Clarissa nodded and made her way to the room. Jenny had made her way to the place to help them out as soon as she found out they would be there.

"Jenny, I have a request. Actually, I'm pretty reluctant to sell this place because I wish to come here every once in a while. Can you do me a favor and drop by to keep the place clean whenever you're free? I'll continue paying you for your service, but you just have to drop by on a monthly basis. What do you think?"

"Clarissa, you don't have to pay me! I'll drop by whenever I'm free! It's not even much of a hassle! I'll definitely try my best to help you!"

"No! I'm sure you don't wish to be a burden of your son, do you? Just stop turning me down and accept the offer."

Clarissa's reply was spot on since Julia, who couldn't do much due to her age, was afraid her daughter-in-law might pick on her for being a burden.

As much as Julia was against the idea, she made up her mind to accept the offer since she was aware she needed the income to contribute to the family.

She was glad Clarissa had reached out to her when she needed help the most.

After striking a deal with Jenny, Clarissa took a nap before making their way to Catherine's grave to pay respect to her.

Standing in front of her grandmother's grave, she held Leia in her arms tightly since she was afraid that her daughter would catch a cold.

Holding her sleeping daughter in her arms, she shared all sorts of things with her late grandmother.

"Grandma, have you long figured out I'm blessed with a daughter? We have named her Leia since she's such a slothful little girl! Her father and brother have never once addressed her name! Thankfully, Matthew has finally found out Leia wasn't such a bad name after checking the bible! In other words, Leia is no longer just a nickname but the official name of our sweetheart."

Matthew exchanged glances with his son in his arms when he heard his wife picking on him in front of her late grandmother.

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She had no intention to stop just yet, but their children couldn't stand it anymore. Albeit reluctantly, she made her way home with her husband and children.

When they were about to leave, they encountered Gloria, who seemed to have aged over the past few months.

Gloria wasn't aware Clarissa and her family were there as she continued making her way to Catherine's grave with a basket of fruits.

Clarissa, who had returned to the car, saw Gloria getting down on her knees in front of Catherine's grave. When Gloria saw the bouquet of flowers, she turned around and saw the departing car.

.....

Matthew and Clarissa threw their daughter a party to celebrate the joyous occasion after sorting out everything. It was an opportunity for Matthew to show others the sort of affection he had for his beloved daughter and family.

Amongst the invited guests were Matthias and Yuliana. They might be Matthew's family and relatives, but they weren't much different from the ordinary guests.

After all, they were ashamed to show up in front of Matthew. Nonetheless, they thought they needed to keep in touch with Damian and Leia.

It turned out George and Margaret knew they were the ones at fault as soon as Shermaine's scandals made it to the headlines.

They thought someone had been messing with Damian's DNA test result, but they were against the idea of taking the initiative to patch things up with Clarissa.

On the other hand, Matthias and Yuliana thought it wasn't much of a big deal. In fact, they thought they needed to consider themselves lucky since Matthew hadn't resorted to severing ties with the family.

Therefore, as soon as they showed up with gifts for the children, they excused themselves after a short while since they were aware their presence wasn't really appreciated.

With that being said, they shared the photos of the children with their parents the moment they returned to the Tyson residence.

Instead of consoling the upset grandparents, Yuliana remained silent throughout the session.

Shermaine and Gary were sentenced to death a few days after the banquet for Leia was over.

On top of the murder cases, Gary was guilty of another few people's death. Therefore, it wouldn't be much of a surprise for someone with such a complicated background to be sentenced to death.

As the mastermind behind several murders, Shermaine was also sentenced to death. However, an attorney showed up out of nowhere and turned the tables.

Nevertheless, Shermaine would have to spend the rest of her life behind bars.

The netizens were against the sentence for Shermaine and thought the only way for her to atone for her sins was death.

There wasn't much the netizens could do to defy the judgment of the panel and judges. Hence, Shermaine was destined to spend the rest of her life behind bars.

A few days after she was thrown behind bars, Shermaine's first guest showed up.

Clarissa had put on a pink coat and a white shirt and a pair of jeans. The fact she had just given birth didn't affect her sexy figure at all.

She had dolled herself with makeup, highlighting her facial features and flawless skin—she didn't seem to be someone who would show up at a jail in the middle of nowhere.

As compared to the dejected Shermaine, Clarissa seemed to be the superior one.

Instead of greeting Shermaine, Clarissa asked in a callous tone, "It has been quite a while, huh?"

Shermaine got increasingly infuriated once she heard Clarissa, but she knew she had to keep her emotions to herself.

Thus, she ended up glaring at the woman in front of her.

To her surprise, Clarissa couldn't care less about her response and announced the reason she was there, "I'm merely here to tell you a few things."

Chuckling with her chest held high, Shermaine asked, "What is it? Are you sure you're not here to make fun of me?"

Shermaine got full of herself when she thought of the secret that could easily shatter Clarissa's blissful life.

However, she had no intention to share the secret with Clarissa just yet. She thought it would be better to share it with Clarissa after a few years to make the most out of Clarissa's misery.

It was then Clarissa chuckled and asked, "I'm sure you're proud of what you have done, aren't you? Well, we shall see if you're still able to carry yourself in a similar manner once you figure out the surprise I have in store for you."

After a few seconds of pause, she muttered to herself, "What should I share with you? Shall we talk about the company of the Smallwoods? I sold it off the moment I acquired ownership over it!"

"Y-You!"

Startled by the news, Shermaine couldn't suppress her wrath anymore.

Unfortunately, Clarissa had no intention to stop just yet. She interrupted the wrathful woman and announced, "Do you know who's the one doing you a favor to keep you safe? I have gotten Matthew to send someone to defend you, but you don't have to thank me since I need you to stay alive!"

As Shermaine gaped at the news, Clarissa added, "After all, I need to keep you alive to torture you for the rest of your life. I want you to spend the rest of your life in isolation, recalling your futile efforts and failures over the years until the very day you pass on."

Shermaine started shrieking hysterically as Clarissa went on. "You don't think you get to leave the jail as long as you behave yourself, do you? Just forget about it because I'll stop you from leaving at all costs as long as I'm alive!"

"Clarissa, I'm going to kill you! I'm going to-"

The wardens rushed over to stop Shermaine from going berserk. Instead of showing her the way back to her cell, they rendered her incapable of motion and allowed Clarissa to finish her speech.

"Stop getting worked up when I'm not even done yet! Aren't you getting full of yourself because you think you have swapped my daughter with someone else's child? Well, I'm afraid I'm going to let you down again because I have sent the innocent child back to their parents! I guess that's all I have for you, Shermaine! It's time for you to enjoy the rest of your life behind bars!"

Clarissa brought herself up and wrapped up the speech with a bright grin, indicating it was over.

Meanwhile, Shermaine had long lost her mind. Glaring at the departing woman, she knew she was completely defeated.

As she went berserk in front of the wardens, she was knocked unconscious and brought back to her cell.

Matthew, who had been waiting outside of the jail, rushed over to his wife's side the moment he saw her. He held her in his arms and kissed her on the chin, asking in a gentle tone, "Shall we go home?"

"Sure! I wonder if Leia is currently awake and missing me because I'm missing her even though we're merely away from one another for just a short while!"

Matthew responded with a smile and said, "Damian is afraid you're going to make your way home soon because he doesn't get to spend enough time with his beloved sister.

The lovely duo talked about all sorts of things on their way home.

You'll Fall for Me, Today or Tomorrow Chapter 420

Leia was weaned when she was fourteen months old.

Just like everyone had expected, Leia had grown to be a beautiful young girl. Her hair was black and lustrous, her eyelashes were impeccably long, and her features were not unlike the perfect creation of a master artist. In fact, she was prettier than a doll.

Anyone who saw her would love to take her home. But even though she was perfect, there was one thing that marred this perfection. You see, Leia didn't like to talk. She didn't care about anyone, and everyone thought she got that from Matthew. Yes, she was cold, but everyone loved that gap more.

However, her family knew Leia wasn't apathetic; she was just an impossibly lazy girl. There was one time where Clarissa had to take a call after she made Leia her milk, so she couldn't feed the girl. Clarissa left the milk on the coffee table and told Leia to finish it on her own.

Leia was on the sofa, reading her favorite book then. The milk was just at arm's length away, so all she had to do was get off the couch and take it. Thinking the girl would do it on her own, Clarissa went away to take the call.

When she came back later, Leia had just closed her book. She was staring at the bottle on the table, but Clarissa realized Leia hadn't even taken it.

Clarissa went down to look Leia in the eye. "Leia, I thought I told you to help yourself. Why didn't you?"

Leia looked at Clarissa, but she didn't answer right away. However, Clarissa waited patiently, so in the end, Leia answered reluctantly, "It's too far."

Clarissa stared at Leia for a moment, then she sighed.

She isn't even motivated to talk? Jesus, this girl is in for some trouble.

But aside from Clarissa, everyone thought Leia's laziness was adorable, even more so than Damian, in fact. Thanks to that, all her relatives liked to play with her so they could see how she would respond to them.

But up until now, Leia never showed any different response no matter who was talking to her, not even her parents.

Even so, Clarissa thought that side of her daughter could be funny sometimes.

That day, Clarissa left Leia home along with Damian. The kids played together, while she went to work.

Her movie was a success, but she never wanted to star in another movie again.

She wasn't a professional actress in the first place. The movie was just a way to confess to Matthew, so she quit after one movie. After that, all she wanted to do was to write her book and script.

Aside from writing, she started spending a lot of time on doing charities. She used to help Olive with her foundation, but only occasionally. It was a busy time for her back then, so she seldom helped.

But that changed after she gave birth. Clarissa started showing up more, and sometimes she brought Leia with her as well. She didn't want to be absent when Leia needed her milk, after all. Not to mention she had great fun and found another purpose in life through doing charity.

Clarissa also thought getting involved in charity would be great for her children as well. Either way, helping out with charities was what Clarissa liked to do the most for the time being, since it brought her peace and color in life.

Olive was holding a big charity banquet for her foundation that day. This time, Clarissa was both a guest and staff member. She was already working on the scene since morning, but she changed into a dress at night so she could attend the banquet.

Matthew wouldn't let her dress too beautifully though, since there wasn't anyone there to keep her safe.

He's been following me all day. Everyone's looking at us. This is so embarrassing.

"Can you just sit down, Matthew? I'll come over once I'm done. Stop following me around..."

Matthew arched his eyebrow, grinning matter-of-factly. "Am I getting in your way, Clarissa? No, right? And I can even help you out."

Clarissa rolled her eyes, but Matthew covered her face quickly and smiled. "Your image, Clarissa."

"What? Nobody's looking."

As if. You have no idea how mesmerizing you look right now, and not just on the outside either. You're charming both on the outside and inside.

Looks weren't the only important thing for the guests in the banquet. They had seen a lot in life, so charm was more important than looks for them.

To Matthew, Clarissa was only getting more charming and beautiful with every passing day, and his love for her only grew deeper.

"Oh, gosh." She chuckled. "Cut it out and have a seat. I'll be there in a minute."

Someone called Clarissa over, so she went over to them, leaving Matthew alone.

Just when Matthew got back to his seat, Jeremy huddled closer and whispered, "Are you getting nervous, Matt?"

Yes, Matthew was nervous, but he didn't show it to anyone. Aside from Clarissa, nobody could see through him.

But Jeremy smiled, for he obviously saw through Matthew. "Clarissa's looking lovely today," Jeremy praised, only to get glared at by Matthew.

Jeremy quickly explained, "Don't get me wrong, Matt. I'm just saying she looks perfect for the occasion. Super perfect, in fact. So don't worry about anything and do what you need to do, Matt."

Then, Jeremy quickly talked to someone else.

Whew, that was a close call. Better keep my mouth shut after this.

The fun part of the night was just beginning, however.

Clarissa came back to Matthew after the auction had officially begun. Everyone on the stage was laughing and chatting merrily, while all the guests were making generous donations, much to Clarissa's delight.

Clarissa smiled at the guests, had some snacks, scrolled through her phone, and even talked to the staff members throughout the event. There were a lot of people there, but Matthew only had eyes for her.

Clarissa was already used to it, so she didn't think it was too mushy. However, everyone else was envious of her and Matthew, since they could see the love overflowing from them.

It had been a long time since Matthew started staring at Clarissa, but the love in his eyes didn't diminish one bit. That alone was proof of his love and Clarissa's charm.

A moment later, Matthew stood up, and Clarissa glanced at him. But she said nothing and kept looking at the stage.

Matthew could feel his palms sweating as he left the table behind him. At first glance, he seemed to be going to the restroom, but when Clarissa looked away, he changed his direction.

The gang who was waiting backstage was obviously excited when Matthew showed up.

Ellie quickly said, "Everything's ready to go, Uncle Matt. Don't worry. Everything's fine. Damian and Leia are here, and they've been absolutely lovely."

Matthew looked at his children. Damian was in a suit, while Leia was in a pretty dress. Their nanny was taking care of them, while they were playing.

Matthew's nerves calmed down a little when he realized his children would be with him later.

"Uncle Matt, do you have the ring?" Ellie patted the ring in Matthew's pocket and nodded. "And here's the bouquet."

He took it from her and held it tightly while paying close attention to everything that was happening on the stage. At that moment, Clarissa was finally invited to go on stage to take part in a game.

Everyone backstage was giving Matthew encouraging looks, but there was also excitement in their eyes.

Suddenly, everything went quiet on the stage, then Ellie shoved Matthew, and he quickly went out.

On the other hand, Clarissa was dumbfounded.

Hey, I thought I was just here for a game. Why's everyone surrounding me? And why are my eyes covered?

She tried to figure out what was happening, but nobody answered her.

Aside from the stage, all the guests were silent too. Not everyone knew what was going on, but they could get the gist of it. The guests were smiling in silence, waiting quietly.

Clarissa was starting to get nervous. "Hey, why aren't you guys saying anything? What is going on?" She finally couldn't take it, so she pulled the blindfold away. It was dark, but once she got used to it, she realized there was someone standing before her.

Matthew was holding the bouquet nervously, while Clarissa started smiling. She even took the time to look at the guests.

Ah, everyone is guilty as charged.

The guests were looking at them silently.

"W-What are you doing?" Clarissa didn't sound angry at all though. In fact, she was feeling slightly shy.

And then Matthew stuffed the bouquet in her hands before whipping the ring out and knelt on one knee.

It was a surprise for Clarissa though it wasn't the first time. In fact, she had been proposed in the same manner a long, long time ago, but she could still remember how romantic it was.

However, she never expected Matthew to propose again. Perhaps, he thought the proposal back then wasn't up to his expectation, so he did it again.

"Clare, I used to be a selfish guy. I didn't know what love is, but you taught me how to love someone. You taught me how to make someone happy. You're the reason my life is complete and happy right now. I'm really grateful to you, and I love you so, so much..."

Matthew's emotions were overflowing at that point, and his voice started to break. On the other hand, Clarissa was already crying.

Matthew didn't say another word. He got up and wore the ring on her ring finger before giving her a hug. Then, he wiped her tears away, whispering, "Don't cry, Clare. Don't cry..."

Clarissa was sobbing, but she said, "Hey, you didn't say 'will you marry me."

That got everyone laughing, while Matthew grinned. "Because I know you'll say 'I do."