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"Out of immediate danger? Does that mean Mrs. Wilson has been in a critical condition?" Natalie balled up her fists. "Shane, what exactly happened to her? Has she fallen sick or something?"

Shane's expression hardened, and his gaze was as cold as ice. "She was pushed down the stairs and was severely injured. That's why she's in the hospital now."

"What?" Natalie's eyes widened. "How did it happen?"

"Someone broke into the Thompson villa last night and rummaged around our bedroom and study, looking for something but to no avail. The man went downstairs and bumped into Mrs. Wilson as she was going upstairs, and he pushed her down. Fortunately, she had only climbed up a few steps, or else she would have been killed given her old age," Shane answered.

The woman bit her lip. "How severe are her injuries?"

"Her back was hurt, and she hit her head. Other than that, she's fine. The man was in a hurry to make a run for it, so he did not murder Mrs. Wilson.

Fortunately, shortly after she was knocked out, the security guard saw that the

door was open, so he came in to check if everything was fine. He found Mrs. Wilson unconscious and sent her to the hospital. Since her phone was not with her, the security guard could not get in touch with me, so he called the company and the manager contacted me."

"I see..." Knowing that Mrs. Wilson was not gravely injured, she heaved a sigh of relief.

The two children felt relieved as well.

"Was it Sean's man?" she asked while looking at the man.

His lips were pressed into a hard line. "Yes. After Mrs. Wilson woke up, the manager sent people to the Thompson villa to look into the matter and check if the man had stolen anything. No valuables were missing, but a lot of Wells Properties' information had been taken away. I guess Sean had sent someone to search for the share transfer agreement of Wells Properties."

Since he was out of the country, Sean had seized this golden opportunity to break into the villa

"He's quite relentless." Natalie snickered.

"I need to go back," Shane said.

The woman nodded in agreement. "Sure. Please check on Mrs. Wilson."

"I will." He pulled her into a hug. "I'll be back soon."

Resting her chin on his shoulder, she mumbled gently, "Okay, I'll wait for you."

That very night, Shane left.

This time, he had asked Silas to stay instead of bringing him along.

Because of that, Sally was really grateful to Shane, as though he were a god.

Natalie burst into fits of giggles at her reaction.

Soon, Silas came into the villa and interrupted the three women's chitter-chatter. "Madam, the police have replied."

Natalie quickly turned to look at him. "What did they say?"

"They've done Annette's record and discovered that many who took part in the same competition as her previously had allergic reactions as well. The police contacted those designers and found they had never eaten or touched any allergens. Hence, the police suspect that Annette had used the same powder against them."

"Hah! She's actually a repeat offender," Lina scoffed. "Well, she wouldn't have been so calm if that had been her first time doing it. She must have done it before, but she covered it up so perfectly that no one ever caught her."

"Did those designers suffer from other symptoms?" Natalie turned to glance at Silas.

The latter nodded. "Yes, one of them had a respiratory infection. He made it to the hospital in time, but his limbs became so stiff that he could no longer draw any design drafts and make clothes."

"What? So his career is ruined?" Lina was taken aback.

Silas sighed. "Yes."

"Damn Annette! She's such a b*tch!" Lina's face reddened in rage.

Natalie patted her hand to calm her down before turning to look at Silas. "Did Annette plead guilty to these offenses?"

"Not yet. I rushed over to inform you right after the police found out about it just now. However, there's solid evidence, so there's no way she can deny it. She's doomed."

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Natalie bobbed her head. "I'm glad to know that. Has Lacey done this before?"

"No, that was her first time. She did it because she feared Mr. Shane. She thought you'd abuse his influence to win the competition, so she wanted to get rid of you first."

Lina let out a sardonic laugh. "Hmph! Yes, Shane is indeed influential, but it doesn't mean that Nat would depend on him to win the competition. She is where she is now solely because of her own capabilities. I don't think she has

no idea how talented Nat is, but she turns a blind eye to it and adamantly believes that Nat is playing dirty. How despicable! Has she been through any unfair treatment previously?"

Silas let out a dry cough. "You're right. Lacey said that her country had organized a design competition the year before. Initially, it was obvious that she would win the championship, but an average and incapable designer snatched the title from her using his prominent background. Since then, she resents people with prominent backgrounds."

"In short, she detests the rich." Sally pursed her lips in disdain.

Natalie sighed and shook her head. "There are thousands of reasons to hate someone. How about Annette? What was her reason for doing so?"

"Madam, she is not against you, but..." He turned to gaze at Lina.

Stupefied, the latter pointed at herself. "Me?"

"Yes, she did it to go against you. She said the resources you received in the previous jewelry design competition were supposed to be hers. The sponsor approached her first but collaborated with you after going through your products. That was why she held grudges against you."

Lina's lips twitched. "I did not know the sponsor had looked for her before approaching me."

No wonder Annette seems so sullen and resentful every time she sees me. I always thought that was just how her personality was, that she looked down

on foreign designers. After all, many people here are rather racist, so the local and foreign designers do not see eye to eye, and there has always been bad blood between the two groups. Never had I thought that the resources are the reason Annette hates me. Well, I can put myself in her shoes. If I were her, and my resources and sponsor were snatched from me by another designer, I would be pissed too even if the designer did not do it on purpose.

"Nat, tell me. Have I done wrong?" Lina asked tentatively.

Natalie shook her head. "Of course not. That's just how things work. You did not steal the resources from her. The sponsor was no fool and would definitely choose to collaborate with a more outstanding designer instead. You don't have to feel guilty about it."

Sally agreed at once, "Yes, Nat is right. The sponsor did not sign any agreement with Annette before looking for you, so it was not against the rule. She should blame herself for not being able to outshine you. Besides, even if you did not receive those resources, she would still have gone against other designers. Otherwise, she would not have harmed so many of them."

"You're right." After the two assured her, Lina was no longer guilt-ridden.

I did not snatch those from her intentionally. Why should I blame myself then?

"All right, Mr. Campbell. Thank you for informing me. You may leave now," Natalie said while looking at Silas.

Sally stood up right away. "I'll go with him."

Natalie giggled. "Sure."

The two left the villa arm in arm.

Lina stood up too. "Nat, I'm going to the police station."

"Are you going to visit Annette?" Natalie could guess her intention in an instant.

Lina hummed in agreement. "I have something to talk to her."

"Go head." The other woman bobbed her head.

After Lina went out, the palatial living room in the villa was left with Natalie alone.

Glancing at the clock, she assumed that Shane's plane had already touched down, so she picked up her phone to call him.