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Meanwhile, the other three children started to eat. They thought that Susan and Maya had a good relationship since Susan often used candies to bribe their sister, so they did not dwell on it.

After the meal, they started to prepare for Patty's class.

Juan asked Evan in displeasure, "Daddy, when will we get to go to school?"

"In another three days."

In three days, Levant would return to K Nation. By then, Nicole would be out of prison, and she would never see him again.

Three more days? Juan sighed, returning to his bedroom with his head hung low.

Two days later, Evan suddenly received a call that shocked him.

"What did you say?"

"Mr. Seet, Ms. Lane passed away!"

Passed away?

Nicole was always in good health. Besides, she was equipped with medical knowledge. Why would she die out of the blue?

No, this must be fake news.

Like a mad man, he rushed out of his office without his coat. Concerned, John chased after him with the forgotten coat in hand.

"Mr. Seet, hold up!" he yelled.

He finally caught up to Evan in the parking lot. When Evan saw him, he immediately ordered, "Drive to the prison now!"

Mr. Seet wants to visit Mrs. Seet?

That's great! He should have gone there a long time ago.

John obediently nodded. "Yes, Mr. Seet."

As the car headed for the prison, Evan was trembling with an uneasy feeling in the pit of his stomach.

How did Nicole die?

It's impossible for her to die.

She must be so bored in prison that she came up with a trick like that so that I would visit her.

That must be the case!

The more he pondered over it, the more he panicked.

By the time they reached the prison, the guard immediately reported, "Mr. Seet, we were unclear over the phone. Ms. Lane has been sent to the hospital."

"Hospital? You should have told me earlier!" Evan roared hysterically.

"Mr. Seet, let's go to the hospital then," John suggested.

With that, Evan turned and rushed to the hospital with John. When they reached there, they realized that Stephen had taken her corpse away.

"Mr. Seet, Sir Musgrave collected Ms. Lane's body."

Evan took out his phone to call Stephen immediately.

"I have cremated Nicole's body. Evan, she died because of you."

After that short line, the call ended.

Thump! Evan's phone slipped out of his hands onto the ground.

Is Nicole really dead?

How is that possible? How can that happen?

And she is already cremated?

How can all this happen so quickly?

And Sir Musgrave blamed her death on me...

I only wanted Nicole never to meet Levant again, so I sent her to prison. Obviously, someone set her up for Grandpa's death. I know she is not the murderer.

However, I never thought of killing her. I only wanted to stop her from leaving with Levant.

I can't lose her!

How is this even possible?

Slowly, Evan bent over to pick up his phone and called Stephen again. However, the call did not get through.

Suddenly, he heard a familiar voice. "Evan, you killed Nicole. Are you happy now?"

It was Levant.

Evan knew his voice all too well.

He looked at Levant with teary eyes and asked curtly, "What are you doing here?"

"Evan, since Nicole is dead now, her ashes have to be buried beside her mother's. Shouldn't you be at the memorial service?"

Evan felt as though his heart was being dug out.

Abruptly, he staggered. I thought Sir Musgrave was lying to me since his phone was switched off. Perhaps Nicole is not dead yet. However, now she is about to be buried?

Evan blacked out as his knees buckled, and he collapsed onto the ground.

"Mr. Seet!"

John quickly reached out to support him and called for a doctor. He could not afford to let anything happen to Evan.

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Sophia and Jonathan hurried over as soon as they heard the news.

"What's wrong, John?"

"Yeah, what happened to Evan?"

Outside the ward, the couple worriedly asked about Evan's condition. John patiently recounted the incident to them.

In the ward, Evan was murmuring Nicole's name in his sleep. His forehead was beaded with sweat.

"Nicole... Nicole..."

Nicole was surrounded by mist as she bid him goodbye. There was pain written all over her delicate, pale face when she waved at him. Then, she turned and left. A glint of sadness was tucked away in her eyes. Yet, he did not notice it. All he saw was Nicole walking further and further away from him.

"Nicole... Nicole-"

Suddenly, he sprang up from the bed. His scarlet red eyes were filled with pain, and his fingers were clenched into fists while the veins on his hands popped as if he was trying to restrain himself.

His parents and John immediately walked in when they heard his screams.

"Evan, you're awake?"

"Are you feeling alright?"

Evan was taken back and looked up to meet Sophia's gaze. "Where's Nicole?"

Sophia was at a loss for words as she was also drowning in sadness after hearing the news of Nicole's passing.

Jonathan sighed and said, "I guess it's better that way. An eye for an eye, that's how it should be. Your grandpa may now rest in peace. The scores are now settled between you and her..."

"She's not a murderer! She didn't kill Grandpa!" Evan screamed hysterically as he interrupted Jonathan.

Jonathan was startled, but he quickly retorted, "Why do you say so? If she isn't the murderer, why did you agree to send her to prison? There is no doubt that she is the murderer!"

Evan was dumbfounded.

I agreed to send her to prison?

Evan's heart stung painfully as Jonathan said those words.

That was not the reason he sent her to prison. He merely wanted her to stay. Unfortunately, he did not expect this to happen.

This is all my fault...

My fault...

"Nicole... I have to find Nicole."

"Mr. Seet, you just regained consciousness. Besides, you're still in a hospital gown."

"Evan, I understand that you want to be there for Nicole for the last time. But you haven't recovered..." Sophia's heart ached at the sight of Evan's pale face and bloodshot eyes.

"John, help me get changed!"

John nodded. "Yes, Mr. Seet."

Seeing that Evan was hellbent on going to Nicole's funeral, the couple relented with a sigh.

They both understood Evan's temper. Once he made up his mind, there was nothing they could do to stop him.

Evan called Levant as soon as he was discharged.

"Where are Nicole's ashes placed?"

"At the cemetery. Hurry up before the burial starts!"

"Don't you dare! What makes you think you have the right to bury her?" Evan gritted his teeth.

"What right? With Sir Musgrave's entrustment, of course! Who are you to question me, murderer!" Levant replied coldly and hung up.

Murderer? I'm a murderer?

A surge of emotions gushed through Evan's heart, causing him to feel a sense of discomfort.

"Go to the cemetery in the Southern suburbs!"

"Yes, Mr. Seet."

John immediately drove toward the cemetery.

Evan was lost in thought while on his way to the cemetery. He recalled the time when he thought his childhood friend was already dead and visited her grave every year.

He remembered the time he met Nicole while he was heading to the cemetery. Her car broke down while Evan happened to drive past in his Maybach. Nicole waved at him, but he did not stop. In fact, he sped past her in a flash as if he saw nothing.

After he had paid his respects and was about to leave, he realized that Nicole's car was in his way. He asked her to move her car before he drove away in his Maybach.

He remembered asking Nicole, "Do you still want your car? I don't mind getting someone to tow it away for you."

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At that time, he did not know that the little girl he had paid his respects to every year was actually Nicole, and she was still alive.

But now...

Would I meet Nicole again on my way there?

Is that possible?

His eyes were fixated outside the window as his heart called out her name, hoping that she would appear.

Evan fought back the tears in his eyes as he passed the spot where Nicole once waved at him for help after her car broke down.

As the car drove away, Evan turned to look at the spot again. He could vaguely see Nicole standing there, waving at him.

Anxiety was written all over her pale face.

"Stop the car!" Evan's sudden command startled John, who stepped on the brakes immediately.

"What is it, Mr. Seet?"

Evan pointed somewhere not far away. "Nicole's car has broken down. Go and fix it for her."

John looked in the direction where Evan's finger had pointed, but he saw nothing.

His heart jolted as chills went down his spine.

Why is Mr. Seet spouting nonsense in broad daylight? I don't see Mrs. Seet anywhere. Is Mr. Seet having a mental breakdown because of her passing?

John was still lost in thought when he noticed Evan getting out of the car and walking quickly toward the empty spot. He took a deep breath and followed suit.

When they arrived, Evan was stunned. He turned to John and asked, "Where's Nicole? Where did she go?"

John opened his mouth to speak but swallowed his words.

But Mrs. Seet was never here!

He was worried that he might provoke Evan if he told him the truth. Hence, he kept quiet.

Evan froze on the spot. For a split second, he felt as if the world was spinning and he was trapped in a nightmare. He could not differentiate between his hallucination and reality.

Before he could register what was happening, his cellphone rang. He quickly answered it.

"Evan, if you don't come now, we're going to bury her!"

Evan snapped back to reality when he heard Levant's icy voice. They immediately hurried to the cemetery as soon as Evan hung up.

By the time they arrived, the burial had begun.

Evan roared hysterically at the men, "Stop right there!"

Levant shot a glance at the men, and they stopped what they were doing.

Evan walked to the half-buried tomb. His tightly clenched hands trembled uncontrollably as if he was hit by a wave of electric shock.

"Nicole... Nicole..."

Are you really in here?

Levant stared at his agonized expression and said, "Are you happy now that you've killed her, Evan?"

Evan looked up and locked eyes with Levant.

"Who gave you the right to cremate and bury her?"

Levant looked at him confidently. "Nicole's father! Is there a problem?"

Evan did not respond to his words.

Of course there is. Nicole must have suffered a great deal because of the cremation. How was she able to endure the pain? Besides, she will feel afraid and lonely if she's buried here alone.

At that thought, Evan squatted down and started digging the soil that had buried the urn with his bare hands like a madman. He was determined to bring Nicole home with him and not leave her there by herself.

Levant was in a hurry to return to K nation. Hence, he couldn't be bothered with Evan's behavior.

"We'll remember what you did to Nicole. Mark my words. One day, we'll come back for you!" Levant said before he left.

Evan and John were the only ones remaining once Levant and his men were gone.

John's heart ached as he watched Evan call out Nicole's name while he continued digging the soil.

"Mr. Seet, let me do it. You should take a break."

However, Evan ignored him and cried out, "Nicole, Nicole..."

Seeing that, John decided to dig with him.

Suddenly, a bolt of lightning that resembled a sharp sword flashed across the sky, followed by a burst of thunder.

John looked at the dark and cloudy sky, praying silently. God, don't rain. Please don't rain.

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Moments later, another roar of thunder sounded, and heavy rain descended from the sky.

"Mr. Seet, it's raining. You should take cover in the car."

Evan ignored him and continued digging through the dirt.

John sighed. It seems that Mr. Seet won't stop until he gets Mrs. Seet out. John could not bear to leave him there, so he joined Evan in silence.

They were drenched shortly after it started raining while the soil turned into wet mud. Both Evan and John were in a terrible state, but they continued digging nonetheless.

Evan could not keep his eyes open due to the pouring rain. However, that did not stop him. He rubbed his eyes against his sleeve and carried on.

He was a clean freak. Yet, he did not seem to care that he was covered in mud from head to toe.

"Nicole, it's raining. Don't be scared. I'll take you home..."

As John glanced at Evan, he noticed the latter's bloodshot eyes. He could not make out if Evan's eyes were filled with tears or rain. All he heard was the normally arrogant man whimpering in a trembling, deep voice.

At that moment, they finally got the urn out of the mud. Stunned, Evan could no longer hold back his tears as they streamed down his face with the rain.

He hugged the urn shakily as he tried his best to shield it from the rain.

"Don't be scared, Nicole. I'll take you home now. Let's go home..."

John was in tears when he saw how hard Evan was trying to protect the urn from the rain.

God, why did you allow Ms. Lane to go like this? The president can't live without her! Why are you so cruel? How could you bear to separate them?

Sigh...

John quickly handed Evan a towel once they got into the car. "Mr. Seet, here. Use this to freshen up."

Evan took the towel and wiped the urn carefully.

"You must be drenched, Nicole. I'm so sorry," he apologized as he handled the urn delicately like a precious jewel.

John's heart was filled with sorrow.

If Mr. Seet brings the urn back home, what is he going to say to the kids? I can't imagine how sad they would be.

John thought of asking Evan, yet he dared not speak.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the car window.

It was Jonathan and Sophia who held umbrellas as they stood outside. John hurriedly got out of the car.

"Sir... Ma'am..."

"How's Evan? It's pouring here. Why haven't you gone back?"

However, John could not think of a response.

Sophia tilted the umbrella toward John during their conversation. She was shocked to see him covered in mud and asked, "John, d-did you roll in the mud?"

"No, it's not like that."

John did not know how to explain it to her. Fortunately, Sophia did not press on but asked, "Where's Evan?"

"Mr. Seet is in the car, Ma'am. Could you try talking to him?"

With a baffled expression, Sophia looked at the troubled John and opened the car door.

She was shocked when she saw Evan holding an urn in his hands.

"Evan, w-what is this?"

She sighed heavily and stretched out her hands to wipe away his tears.

Jonathan was also taken back when he witnessed the scene.

"Evan, are you crazy? Why're you holding that?"

"I have to bring Nicole home."

Surprised by Evan's decision, Jonathan chided, "No one brings an urn home! Why would you do that? Are you planning to consecrate her or go to sleep with it?"

Sophia cried, "Evan, I understand the love you have for Ms. Lane, but you really shouldn't take this home. I'm begging you. Think about your children back at home. If they see it, they will realize that their mommy is gone. They won't be able to take it."

Evan hugged the urn tighter when Sophia mentioned his children.

"Their mommy has left, so they should send her off one last time."

"Silly boy! You can't do this. You should be considerate of their feelings!"

Jonathan said sternly, "If you tell them, they will resent you! They saw it with their own eyes when you sent Nicole to prison. And now you want to tell them that their mommy died there? They're definitely going to hate you!"

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At that moment, Evan's mind was blank.

If the kids are going to hate me, then so shall it be. I hate myself too. If hatred could kill, I'd rather die right now than be apart from Nicole.

Sophia realized Evan was not going to change his mind, so she grabbed his arm and said, "Evan, you can't be so selfish. It's too much for the children to bear. Do you want them to live the rest of their lives with the fact that their mommy passed away and resent you?"

"You should learn from Nicole. We all thought you were dead during the plane crash. Nicole was worried the kids wouldn't be able to take the blow. Hence, she hid the truth from them and suffered the pain alone. How could you be so cruel and selfish now? Do you not care about their feelings at all?"

Evan's deep-set eyes widened when he heard Sophia's words.

Nicole must have been devastated when she thought that I died in the plane crash! She was so much stronger than I am. How could someone so tough leave the world just like that?

"Mr. Seet, Ma'am's right. Mrs. Seet wouldn't be able to rest in peace if she saw you in this state."

"Why should she rest in peace? Why would I want her to rest in peace? In fact, I won't allow her to leave with peace of mind. I want her to come back to life!" Evan roared.

Tears streamed down Sophia's face when she saw Evan like this.

She cried out at the urn in Evan's hands and said, "Ms. Lane, if you're listening, please convince Evan to come to his senses. Everyone is depending on him, especially the Seet Group. He can't go on like this anymore."

Jonathan exhaled. "Evan, you should let her rest in peace. Ms. Lane will condemn you if you keep this up!"

"Mr. Seet, if you bring it back, your children will see it. What if they do something foolish? You will regret it for the rest of your life," John persuaded.

Evan held the urn against his chest tightly, indicating that he had made up his mind.

"I'll hide it from them, okay?"

He's still trying to bring it home.

Mr. Seet is a stubborn man, so much so that no one can change his mind once he has decided on something.

The three of them were unsure of what to say. The only sound amidst the dreadful silence was Sophia's crying.

Jonathan intended to say something, but Evan beat him to it. "Shhh, Nicole doesn't like noise!"

He then glanced at John. "John, take me to the company. We'll head back home once the children are asleep."

The three of them exchanged glances. John did not dare to go against Evan, so he waited to see if Jonathan and Sophia were going to say anything else.

Yet, he only heard Jonathan sigh heavily. "Evan, y-you're the boss! Do whatever you want!"

Then, he dragged Sophia out of the car and left.

"Evan, listen to me. You can't bring this back. Let Ms. Lane rest in peace."

Bang!

Evan ignored Sophia, who was standing outside the car, as he shut the car door abruptly.

"Let's go!"

"Yes, Mr. Seet."

It was late at night.

The clock struck 11 p.m. when Evan brought the urn back to Hillside Villa.

The children were already fast asleep while Susan was in the living room, waiting for Evan to return.

She quickly walked out to welcome him when she spotted Evan's car pull up in the garage.

When she walked up to Evan, she noticed something in his arms and let out a scream, "Ahh!"

"Evan, w-what're you holding?"

Evan merely gave her a sharp glance and ignored her before heading straight to his bedroom.

Susan froze when she realized what it was, and no word could escape her lips for a long while. The color drained from her face as her heart raced wildly.

I can't believe Evan brought back Nicole's urn. Besides, how could he turn a blind eye on me, a living person? Why is Nicole still a stumbling block in my way even though she's dead? Why?

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Susan couldn't accept it, so she called Sophia as soon as she returned to her room.

Sophia sighed when she answered the call. "Susan, you're aware of how persistent Evan can be. Just go along with him for now. He'll come to let it go after a while. Take good care of the four kids, and don't tell them about Nicole's passing yet."

"Okay, I'll take good care of them. However, I really don't feel good about leaving a corpse in the house. I'm afraid that it might be a bad omen for the household. Please advise him when you have the time to do so," Susan replied.

"Don't worry, I will," reassured Sophia.

"Sophia, it's getting late. You should get some rest now," Susan urged before ending the call.

After hanging up, Susan let out a deep sigh. The thought of Evan bringing back the urn of ashes made her hair stand on end, as though a gust of cold wind had just blown toward her.

Where did Evan place the urn? Could he have put it in the bedroom?

Back in his bedroom, Evan gently stroked the urn of ashes that he had placed on the bed as he whispered, "Nicole, we're home now. It's time to rest. If you don't feel comfortable staying here, I'll bring you to Imperial Garden tomorrow."

Evan felt that it was the most appropriate to leave Nicole's ashes in Imperial Garden since the place belonged to her.

"You must miss the kids a lot. You'll get to see them since we're back here today. They miss you very much too. I'll take a shower first, then we can go to sleep together," he added.

Thereafter, he headed to the bathroom.

Meanwhile, Susan tiptoed over to Evan's room and gently knocked on the door twice, but she didn't hear any movement inside the room. Hence, she carefully pushed the door open as she took a curious peek inside.

When she saw the urn of ashes on the bed, her face instantly turned pale.

Evan actually kept Nicole's ashes in his bedroom?

Is he hugging the urn to sleep?

"Ms. Susan, what are you looking at?" a young voice suddenly asked.

Juan's question caught Susan by surprise.

"Are you looking for Daddy? He's not in now. You should go back and rest," Juan uttered.

Right after that, she quickly shut Evan's bedroom door as she walked away.

Juan felt that something was amiss when he caught sight of Susan's pale face.

Why is this woman sneakily peeking into Daddy's bedroom?

Curious to know what she was looking at, he opened the bedroom door and strode inside.

The room was generally empty, but the urn on the bed caught his attention.

Thus, he immediately walked over to take a closer look at it.

What is this? Juan was baffled as he inspected the strange-looking vessel.

At that moment, Evan walked out of the bathroom and was startled to see Juan in front of his bed.

His heart ached when he saw how his son had touched the urn.

"Why are you not asleep yet?" he questioned in a deep voice.

Juan turned his head and looked at Evan who was currently drying his hair before he asked, inquisitively, "Daddy, what is this?"

Unaware of how to answer his son, Evan remained silent as he engaged himself in deep thought for a long time.

Sophia's words about protecting the kids reverberated in his ears repeatedly.

At long last, he walked toward the bed and reached out to pat Juan's head. "Are you thinking about Mommy?" he asked.

Juan nodded his head fervently as the glimmer in his eyes reflected just how much he yearned for his mother.

"Stay here a little longer then," murmured Evan.

Juan was puzzled by his father's words.

After pondering over it for a while, he asked, "Daddy, you miss Mommy too, right? I believe that Great-grandpa wasn't actually killed by Mommy! Seeing as such, will you rescue her, please?"

Evan turned his gaze toward the urn of ashes on his bed as his heart throbbed painfully.

He then took a deep breath and agreed, "Okay."

Upon hearing this, Juan grew excited.

"Daddy, you've agreed to rescue Mommy? Really?" He sought to reaffirm Evan's confirmation.

Evan began to mull over his words. If I could go back in time, I would definitely rescue Nicole.

If only I had such an opportunity, I would have brought Nicole back without hesitation.

But——

As he started to tear up, he quickly turned to Juan and muttered, "It's getting late. Go back to sleep now."

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Did Daddy agree or disagree? Juan began to think over his father's earlier words.

Since Daddy said 'okay' just now, he would probably do it soon.

He then strode out of Evan's bedroom happily.

After the door was shut, Evan turned to look at the urn of ashes and muttered, "Nicole, you saw Juan, right? You were the one who had raised him single-handedly. He's such a sensible boy."

Then, he paused for a brief moment and urged, "Nicole, let's go to sleep now."

After he switched off the lights, he laid on the bed and hugged the urn tightly to sleep.

The night passed by very slowly.

As the moon shone on Evan's white and fluffy bed, he remained curled up on the bed while he protected the urn in his arms. His silhouette appeared both lonely and desolate.

At dawn, Evan woke up and got ready to move the urn to Imperial Garden.

The previous night, he had dreamt of Nicole looking down at him in disappointment. He speculated that she didn't want to stay in Hillside Villa, afraid that the children might see her sad.

There will be someone to look after her in Imperial Garden, and she wouldn't have to worry about the kids seeing her sad. No one would bother her there.

Meanwhile, as Susan watched Evan leave with the urn in his arms, her face turned gloomy.

She believed that the stumbling block between them was nothing more than an urn of ashes and that it should have been easier for Evan to get over a pile of ashes than an actual person.

She was hopeful that her brighter days were not far away.

For breakfast, she deliberately instructed the cook to prepare the four children's favorite food.

The butler then informed them that Evan had permitted them to go to school again.

The children were surprised yet elated to hear this news.

"Where's Daddy?" they asked.

"Your father is busy. Go ahead and have your breakfast first. You don't have to wait for him today," Susan answered.

After the children had finished their breakfast, the driver sent them to school.

On the way to school, Nina asked, "When do you think Daddy will rescue Mommy?"

"It should be very soon. Daddy promised me last night," explained Juan.

"Really?" Nina responded.

Juan nodded his head. "Of course it's true. Just wait and see."

Overwhelmed by the wonderful news, Maya stared at him with teary eyes.

If Daddy can rescue Mommy, I won't have to be scared of getting beaten by Ms. Susan anymore.

Kyle, on the other hand, remained expressionless. He felt that his father was finally going to return to his usual self.

As the night fell, the streets were illuminated by the city lights.

Having spent the entire day in Imperial Garden with the urn of ashes, Evan mumbled, "Nicole, I'm thinking of settling Lane Corporation's affairs tomorrow. The company was built with your blood, sweat, and tears. We can't possibly let it go down the drain! What do you think?"

At that moment, his phone suddenly rang, and he picked up the call impatiently.

"Mr. Seet, there are several documents that require your signature urgently. Could you——" John was interrupted by Evan before he could finish speaking.

"I'm busy now!" Evan yelled as he hung up the phone.

He wanted to attend to Nicole's affairs, and he did not have time for anything else.

John looked down at his phone screen and let out a deep sigh.

Mr. Seet must be spending time with Mrs. Seet's ashes. How much longer is he going to do this?

Meanwhile, Susan was restless as she waited for Evan to return. She felt that she needed to shower him with love and care at this time to melt his cold heart.

Thus, she mustered up her courage and gave him a call.

When Evan saw the caller ID on his phone screen, he immediately declined the call.

Susan was just thinking about what she could say to him, and she was hoping that he would give her the chance to speak. However, he merely declined her call!

Could he be busy right now? Perhaps he had accidentally declined my call?

A minute later, Susan called him again.

This time, Evan looked at the caller ID in disgust and answered her call.

"Evan, what time are you coming back?" Susan asked.

"Don't wait for me, and don't call me unnecessarily in the future," he answered coldly.

Nicole won't be happy that you're disturbing us.

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There and then, Evan hung up the phone again.

Susan's expression stiffened. Why did Evan sound so disgusted with me just now? How could he treat me like this?

"Ms. Susan, can we eat yet?" Maya asked timidly as her stomach growled in hunger.

Susan quickly regained her senses and looked at the children with a forced smile on her face. "Yes, you can," she replied.

The children then started devouring their dinner.

Susan looked at them as she continued to think about Evan's attitude toward her. The more she pondered over it, the more uncomfortable she felt.

Why?

Why is Evan treating me this way?

All of a sudden, Maya dropped one of her bamboo chopsticks on the ground.

"Ms. Susan, go and fetch Maya a fresh pair of chopsticks," instructed Nina as she looked at Susan arrogantly.

Susan's face darkened. Damned kid! How could she dare to order me around?

Maya is a fat and stupid kid who just can't stop herself from eating. She needs to be taught a lesson.

"Hold on. I'll get a fresh pair for you," muttered Susan as she glanced at the children with a forced smile on her face.

Nina felt a sense of delight when Susan got up and went to the kitchen. She's such a bad woman. We can't be too nice to her!

On the other hand, Maya was overcome with worry because she caught a sinister look in Susan's eyes when she walked past just now.

Will Ms. Susan begin to abuse me again?

She trembled anxiously as she continued eating.

After she finished her meal, her worries soon turned into reality.

Susan took her into the bedroom under the pretext that she wanted to tell her a story.

Thinking about Evan had acted as though he was disgusted by her and how Nicole was a stumbling block even after her death, she shot Maya a death glare.

Maya's heart started thumping rapidly at that very moment. Her hands fidgeted restlessly and her eyes welled up with tears as she glanced at Susan in fear.

"Ms. Susan, I was wrong. I shouldn't have dropped my chopsticks on the floor," she admitted with a quivering voice.

Being a young, innocent child, Maya didn't understand the real reason that Susan was treating her this way. She thought that Susan was angry at her because of her earlier blunder.

Susan curled her lips as she bent down to pinch Maya's chubby cheeks. "You stupid pig! Even pigs are smarter than you! You're a waste of food," she admonished the little girl.

Maya couldn't help but question herself at Susan's words. Ms. Susan called me a stupid pig, but Mommy always tells me that I'm smart.

When she recalled how gentle and loving Nicole was toward her, tears started rolling down her cheeks uncontrollably and she whimpered, "Mommy, Mommy——"

She was cut off abruptly by Susan who warned her fiercely, "What are you whining about? Keep quiet!"

Maya immediately shut her mouth.

After that, Susan pinched her twice on her body before she walked up to the closet and took out a box of silver needles.

When Maya saw the box, she trembled with fear and begged, "Ms. Susan, please don't poke me. I'll be good."

Susan then recalled Evan's cold attitude and how he had told her not to call if there was nothing important.

Every word that he uttered was like a needle that had pierced through her heart.

Sinister thoughts soon crept into her mind. How many needles should I use to pierce this stupid pig in order to get even with Evan?

Maya's eyes were filled with terror when she saw Susan walking toward her with needles.

Mommy! Help me!

She screamed in her heart, but she did not dare to make a sound as she feared that her mother would be beaten to death if she shouted.

At that very moment, Maya felt that being alive was a rather frightening thing.

"I'm warning you not to make a sound! If you do, you and your mother will die," Susan threatened.

Maya shook her head vigorously as she began to worry in her mind. I don't want Mommy to die. I won't shout...

Her face turned pale as Susan started pricking her buttocks and thighs with needles. Droplets of sweat appeared on her forehead while tears rolled down her cheeks.

It hurts so much.

Go easy on me, Ms. Susan.

Susan was stunned when she saw the prick marks on Maya's buttocks and thighs, but she felt that Maya still needed to be pricked on her arms.

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Susan pricked Maya's fleshy arms with a needle.

Then, she took out another needle and pricked her again.

In her desperate efforts to suppress her pain, Maya began to gnaw at her own lips so hard until she had bled.

Ah! It hurts all over. It really hurts!

I simply don't understand how Ms. Susan has turned into a terrifying monster. Was she possessed by the old witch from the fairy tale?

When Susan finally stopped, Maya collapsed onto the ground, her face pale white and her eyes shut.

Susan kept the needles aside as she brought Maya into the bathroom and cleaned her up.

When Maya returned to her bedroom, Nina was already fast asleep, so she climbed straight into her bed and hid beneath her blanket. She trembled with fear periodically throughout the entire night.

The next morning, Nina woke up and found Maya wrapped in her blanket tightly with her eyes shut.

"Maya, it's time to get up. We need to go to school after breakfast," she urged.

Maya faintly heard her sister calling out to her, but she felt weak as her whole body was in pain.

"Get up." Nina reached out to nudge her.

Maya opened her eyes and crawled out of bed as she struggled to put on her clothes and shoes.

By then, Nina was completely ready to go. She looked at Maya and sighed. "You're so slow. Come here, I'll help you brush your hair," she suggested.

As Maya walked up to Nina unsteadily, she lost her balance and collapsed.

Shocked by her sudden fall, Nina instantly tried to elicit a response from her. However, when Maya did not respond after two calls, she quickly called out for help.

Kyle and Juan were startled to see Maya lying on the ground unconsciously.

On the other hand, Susan began to feel a sense of panic, as her heart began to pound frantically. How has she suddenly fainted? Could it have something to do with what happened last night?

"Send Maya to the hospital now," Kyle quickly instructed the driver before Susan could stop him.

As Susan was worried that the doctor would possibly uncover what had really happened to Maya, a scheming look suddenly flashed across her eyes.

Kyle then gave Evan a call to inform him about Maya, and he immediately rushed to the hospital.

While the doctor examined Maya's body, he was astonished to find prick marks on her arms.

Upon further examination, he found that there were many more prick marks on her legs and buttocks, along with bruises caused by pinching.

It was clear that she had been physically abused.

This discovery confounded the doctor.

Who would dare to abuse Mr. Seet's daughter?

Could it be——

As a doctor, he simply couldn't let this go just because the patient came from a prominent family.

He walked out of the consultation room and invited Evan to the next room before he uttered cautiously, "Mr. Seet, your child is so young. She shouldn't be treated this way."

His remarks caused Evan to be puzzled.

"What happened to Maya?" he asked.

"Mr. Seet, there are prick marks and bruises all over her body. It's clear that she is being physically abused, and it appears that it was not merely a one-time affair. You shouldn't——" The doctor was interrupted before he could finish speaking.

"What?" Evan interjected as he looked at the doctor in shock. "Are you sure of it?"

The doctor was surprised by his response.

Mr. Seet is unaware of it? He's not the one who has done it?

Ah, of course. I was overthinking this earlier. How could the president of Seet Group do such a despicable thing, let alone to his own daughter?

"Mr. Seet, come and take a look," he urged to Evan.

The other children sitting outside the consultation room were shocked by this news.

"Did the doctor really say that Maya is being abused?" Juan furrowed his brows, perplexed.

Nina was equally perplexed. "Who abused her?"

With a cold expression on his face, Kyle walked toward the consultation room without saying a word.

Inside the consultation room, Evan's heart ached unbearably when he saw the prick marks and bruises on Maya's body.

She quickly tried to cover the prick marks with her hands as she didn't want her father to see her in this condition, but her hands were too small to cover them completely.

Looking at the fear on Maya's pale face, Evan felt a fierce and intense pain in his heart.

Who would do such a cruel thing to my daughter?

How dare this person touch my precious girl! Damn it!

He reached out to stroke Maya's chubby little face, then he asked gently, "Maya, tell me, who bullied you?"

Like a traumatized fawn, she shook her head vigorously.

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That familiar threatening voice rang in Maya's ears. "If you tell others about this, your Mommy will be in jail, suffering for the rest of her life."

Evan persuaded, "Maya, you can tell Daddy."

Fidgeting her chubby fingers, Maya glanced at Evan as tears welled up in her eyes.

"Maya, don't be afraid. Tell Daddy." Evan continued asking Maya questions and saw the pensive look in her eyes.

Suddenly, she cried out, "Mommy, I'm sorry... I'm really sorry..."

What will happen to Mommy if Daddy knows? Will Mommy be in jail forever?

Evan, the doctor, and the other three kids looked at Maya without saying a word.

In fact, they were surprised at how Maya reacted. Why would Maya feel sorry for Mommy? What does this have to do with Nicole?

Suddenly, Susan barged into the room.

"Evan, how's Maya?" She looked very upset when Evan turned to look at her.

She continued, "I'm so sorry, Evan. I didn't take good care of Maya. After knowing Maya fainted and was sent to the hospital, Leah wanted to leave. I tried to force the reason out of her, but she committed suicide after admitting to abusing Maya as she feared the consequences."

After hearing her words, Evan fell silent.

She died?

Evan narrowed his eyes.

Working as a maid in Hillside Villa for a few years, Leah had always been dutiful. But why would she abuse Maya?

Susan looked at Maya with her face etched with pain. "Maya, don't worry. Leah's dead, so she can't hurt you anymore. It's my fault for not noticing your sufferings. I will call your Mommy and tell her to come back for you. Is that okay?"

When Maya heard her Mommy would take care of her, she nodded fervently.

As long as I can be together with Mommy, I don't care if I got beaten.

Susan said, "Maya, don't be sad. I'll take good care of you from now on."

And Maya nodded like a fool.

Hearing that, Nina stomped her foot in anger. "Leah must be crazy. Why would she torture Maya for no reason? If she was still alive, I'd beat her up!"

Susan chimed in and added fuel to the fire. "Yeah. Leah has a mental illness, and she's been taking her meds in secret. I've heard that she likes to abuse children when she was young. Thank goodness she's gone now, so good riddance to her."

Evan frowned. Hmm... I never knew that Leah was ill...

Kyle stared at Susan. Something seemed amiss, but he couldn't put a finger to it.

Right then, Juan asked, "Maya, why didn't you tell us? If you did, we'll help you."

However, Maya couldn't tell them the truth, so she stayed silent.

Susan hurriedly interrupted. "That's enough. Maya must be terrified, so we should let her rest. Maya, do you want to stay in the hospital or return home?"

"Hospital. I want to stay at the hospital." Maya answered without hesitation, as she didn't want to be tortured by Susan again.

Susan suggested, "Alright. I'll stay here with you."

Upon hearing her words, Maya had a look of fear. Evan rejected her suggestion and said, "It's okay. I'll stay here to take care of Maya. Meanwhile, please bring the kids back home."

Yet Susan insisted, "Evan, why don't we take care of Maya together?"

"There's no need to. I said that earlier, so don't make me repeat myself."

After that, Susan didn't say anything and left the hospital with the other three kids.

On their way home, Nina's heart ached as she thought of the bruises on Maya's body. Leah had paid the price with her life, so there wasn't a need to pursue this matter any further. However, Nina still couldn't figure out the reason that Leah had abused Maya.

Then, she asked, "Leah has a mental illness, but why does she only abuse Maya and not me? Maya is chubby, and I'm quite skinny. Isn't it logical for her to target me instead?"

Juan analyzed the matter and said, "Maybe she thinks Maya is an easy target."

Kyle, who was staying silent the entire time, looked at Susan suddenly. "Ms. Susan, what do you think? Do you think Maya is a pushover, so she got abused?"

Hearing his question, Susan's heart stopped a beat. The way Kyle looked at her resembled Evan. Both their gazes were cold and stern.