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“Really?” Vivian looked at Finnick tearfully. He was her only hope.

“Of course.” Finnick wiped away her tears and stroked her cheek. “She’ll be okay. Just trust me, won’t you?”

“I-I will.” Vivian nodded vigorously. “If you say she’ll be fine, then she will be fine. I trust you.”

“Good. Shall we go see her first?”

“Absolutely not!” exclaimed Vivian, who was agitated again. “I haven’t told her anything, and I don’t want her to see me like this!”

“In that case, why don’t we head home?”

Vivian nodded weakly at that.

Then, Finnick turned around and gently escorted a weakened Vivian to the car that was waiting outside.

Throughout the ride home, Finnick held her in his arms.

She was probably emotionally exhausted. In a few moments, Vivian fell asleep on his shoulder. Her eyes were still wet with lingering teardrops, but Finnick thought that she looked particularly vulnerable.

When the couple arrived home, Finnick had to carry her out of the car and into the house. Given how the news took a toll on her, Vivian never woke up despite the commotion.

Finnick gingerly carried her to the bedroom and set her down on the bed. After he tucked her in, he lay down next to her in silence.

Although Vivian was in deep slumber, it was not a fitful rest. She felt herself weave in and out of dreams that passed into nightmares. Now and then, tears would wet the corners of her closed eyes.

Finnick could not sleep a wink when he saw how restless she was. With a thumb, he gently wiped Vivian's tears away and held her, hoping that he could provide some comfort.

He reflected on how recently, he seemed to have seen more of her tears than anything else. This is all my fault. All I can do is make my wife cry.

Slowly, he leaned over to kiss the top of Vivian's head as he gently patted her back as he would a child. Finnick hoped that the simple gesture would bring her some comfort in her sleep.

When Vivian awoke a while later in a dark bedroom, she was initially confused. Am I at home? What time is it?

She reached over to turn the lights on and gradually willed herself into sobriety. However, she recalled what happened at the hospital earlier and started to shed tears again.

Finnick happened to walk in on Vivian crying in silence, her fists bunched up in the sheets. With a low sigh, Finnick walked to the bed and held her in his arms. "Hey, don't cry. You're going to cry your eyes out if you don't stop."

With conscious effort, Vivian did her best to hold back her tears as she looked at Finnick.

He felt his heart sting when he saw that Vivian's eyes were swollen to the size of plums. "You haven't eaten all day, I think? Why don't you wash up, and we'll head down for some food?"

Vivian answered him with a very hoarse-sounding "yes" and padded into the bathroom.

After she washed her face and went downstairs, she found that the table was already set for a simple meal. Finnick had made her a simple but hearty chicken stew. The kindness and the gentleness of Finnick's gesture touched Vivian. This reminded her how things were before Evelyn showed up and ruined everything.

Over the next few days, Finnick did not go to work. Instead, he stayed at home and kept Vivian company, all while he actively put effort into placing inquiries. He had contacted several experts in leukemia research.

His actions had cleared all doubts Vivian had about Finnick not loving her. She found herself reveling in a bond that had only deepened much further.

The day came when Vivian finally received the much-awaited call from the hospital. She was to go there in person to get the full report and decide on her next course of action.

“Of course, I’ll be there right away.” She rushed to the hospital anxiously as soon as she hung up. Finnick, unfortunately, had some matters to oversee at the Finnor Group. Thus, Vivian had to take a taxi to the hospital by herself.

The journey to the hospital was nerve-wracking. Vivian fidgeted restlessly in the car, unable to stop herself from thinking about the worst possible outcomes. What if my bone marrow does not match Rachel’s? Can Finnick really step in and help me find a donor? And if I really can’t find a donor, am I going to watch my mother die?

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The thoughts were enough to make Vivian tear up. She blinked a few times and tried to suppress the burst of emotion that threatened to overflow. At the same time, she willed herself to be strong for the sake of her mother. After all, she had yet to find out what the results were. There was no sense in scaring herself like that.

The minute she arrived, Vivian hurried to see the doctor who had examined her before.

“What news, doctor? Is my bone marrow compatible with my mother’s?” Heavens above, I really hope that I can save my mother. I have to.

“Have a seat,” said the doctor, who gestured at the chair next to him. “I’ll go into details.”

Vivian sat down nervously and eyed the solemn-looking doctor. She had a bad feeling that she couldn’t quite place but fervently hoped that it was not what she feared.

“The results, doctor?” asked Vivian again. She was so nervous she could burst into tears again.

The doctor sighed, took off his glasses, and rubbed the bridge of his nose thoughtfully. "According to the results, your bone marrow does not match. Unfortunately, you are not a suitable donor."

As the doctor said this, Vivian's heart sank. She felt as if the very wind had been knocked out of her chest and found it difficult to breathe. "What can we do, doctor? Is there any other way to treat her?"

"Don't worry. Your mother is not in danger at the moment." The doctor did everything they could to comfort Vivian in the face of uncertainty. "This hospital is affiliated with the Red Cross, and we've already submitted a request. Once we find a suitable donor for her, we'll have her operation arranged in no time at all."

Vivian nodded at the doctor gratefully. "Thank you, doctor. I appreciate you going through all the trouble."

"It's okay, that's what we're here for. However, I would also suggest that your family look into other avenues privately and seek donors elsewhere. After all, surgeries like this are best attempted as soon as possible."

Vivian nodded again in understanding. "But doctor, if I may ask, how do I go about doing that? This is something I have never attempted before." Since Vivian had never had to consider something like this, she had no idea where to start.

"Usually, you can apply for assistance through the local Red Cross, or you can make inquiries at the National Marrow Bank. Given how the internet is so widely used now, you can also try making an appeal on social media platforms."

Vivian made a mental note of what she needed to do. "Thank you, doctor. I'll be in touch."

With that, Vivian bolted out of her seat and prepared to leave. She wanted to start looking for a compatible donor for Rachel as soon as possible. If she was lucky enough in her search, Vivian was prepared to do whatever it took to ensure that the other party would agree.

"Wait a moment, Ma'am." The doctor stopped Vivian in her tracks, right before she could leave the office.

Vivian turned around to look at the doctor, visibly confused. "Was there something else we had to discuss?"

"Two more things, to be precise. But I need you to brace yourself."

"What's the matter? It isn't about my mother, is it?"

"No, it's about you this time."

"Me?" Vivian did not understand what the doctor meant. "Is something wrong with me?"

The doctor hesitated. A slight hint of discomfort flickered across his face as he fidgeted with his glasses again. "The results of the examination have shown us not just the incompatibility of your marrow, but that your DNA is completely different from that of your mother's. You are not your mother's biological daughter."

"How is this possible?" Vivian's instinctive reaction was to not believe a word she had just heard. "Surely there must be some kind of mistake? How am I not my mother's biological daughter?"

"The results don't lie, Ma'am. I think it's a conversation you should have with your mother."

Vivian felt a myriad of emotions course through her body, from disbelief to anger, to a pang of intense sadness. This is impossible. How am I not her daughter? Yet, what if it's true? And if I am not her daughter, who the hell am I?

"There is one other thing. You're pregnant."

"What?" Vivian absent-mindedly reached upwards and stroked her belly. "I'm... pregnant?"

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"Yes, you've been pregnant for about a month now. Congratulations, you're going to be a mother."

Vivian was stunned and overwhelmed by all the information that she had to process.

“Though I have to warn you that the fetus is still in an unstable condition due to your recent emotional ups and downs. You need to regulate and control your grief, or it will be a bit too much for the fetus to bear.”

“I understand. Thank you, doctor.” Vivian forced a smile at the doctor before departing, her mind completely numb.

As she made her way towards one of the vacant seats outside, Vivian felt as if her mind was swimming in jelly. Her emotions were a mess, and she could not think with a clear head. After taking a few deep breaths, Vivian closed her eyes and slowly tried to organize her thoughts.

My bone marrow is not a match, so I have to find a suitable donor for mom. I may not be Rachel’s biological daughter, and I’m also pregnant?

Instinctively, Vivian looked down at her stomach, which was still flat. Is there truly another living being in there?

She then placed both hands on her belly. Vivian was a little excited at the prospect that she and Finnick would soon have a child together.

Recalling what the doctor said earlier, if her calculations were correct, she should have conceived the night before the kidnapping.

Vivian shuddered. When she was kidnapped, she had struggled quite violently against her captors. This gave her some injuries which required hospitalization. This would not affect the baby, would it? The doctor had also mentioned that her emotional state needed regulation, yet she had been worried sick. Surely the number of tears she shed was not healthy for the baby.

Vivian could not help but blame herself a little. For one, she failed to notice that she was pregnant. She also made the baby suffer quite a bit together with her.

“I’m sorry, little one. Your mother has been a terrible protector. I promise that you won’t be hurt anymore in the future.” Vivian murmured the apology to the child in her belly and lovingly stroked her stomach.

I am definitely happy about this pregnancy. After all, Finnick and I have been yearning for a child. I just never expected the little one to show up out of the blue.

However, she could not bring herself to smile. Questions about her parentage had put a real damper on her spirits, which made her feel deeply uncomfortable.

No, I must ask mom about this.

Vivian stood up and began a slow walk towards Rachel's ward. Throughout the entirety of her trip, she could feel nothing but discomfort. How was she going to pose such a difficult question to the only person she'd known as a mother?

She soon found herself facing the door of the ward. Vivian stood there impassively for a moment before turning around and walking away. At that moment, she had decided that she was not going to ask her mother anything.

Perhaps it was a mistake, after all. She was Rachel's daughter, and Rachel was her mother. Nothing had changed. They were still family, and family needed each other.

However, the prognosis of Rachel's condition made Vivian stop in her tracks abruptly.

Rachel needed to have surgery as soon as she could. If she was truly not her daughter, then perhaps her biological daughter could be a possible donor. It was likely the fastest way too.

Suddenly, her emotions became cloudy and muddled again. Vivian reflected on the fleeting impermanence of life and wondered why God was so cruel to her. Why did she have to make that choice?

In the end, reason finally bested emotion as Vivian returned to the ward, more determined than before.

When she opened the door, Vivian saw Rachel lying on the hospital bed. The tv was on, and she heard her mother laugh. Maybe she was watching something funny.

"You're here again, Vivian!" Rachel beckoned to her with a grin. "Look at how funny this person is! I'm in stitches as we speak!"

An anxious Vivian walked towards Rachel's bed and sat down next to her. She looked up at Rachel, who still grinned at her, and felt her heart sink. How am I going to broach the subject?

Rachel observed Vivian's behavior and seemed to sense that something was off. Her daughter was not her usual jovial self. Vivian had walked in with her head hung low without a smile on her face, and it made Rachel wonder if her daughter had a bad day.

She then turned down the volume of the television before she looked at Vivian again. "You don't look happy at all, Vivian. Did you quarrel with Finnick or something?"

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Looking up at Rachel, Vivian shook her head slightly and hesitated before speaking. "No, Mom. But... I have a question."

"What is it?" Rachel found Vivian's expression to be a little odd. "Silly girl, you can ask me anything. What are you finding so hard to talk to your own mother about? It's not like I have anything to hide from my daughter."

Rachel's words struck a sour note in Vivian's heart. She struggled to hold back her tears and still hoped that the doctor's examination was a mistake.

"Mom, I... am... Am... I..." Vivian stammered, still unable to get the words out.

"What on earth is it that's making you stutter like that?" asked Rachel with a smile.

Vivian tried to look Rachel straight in the eye as she enunciated every word. "Am I your biological daughter?" She poured every bit of hope she had as she silently prayed that her mother would at least give her some reassurance.

The question Vivian asked wiped the smile off Rachel's face in an instant. She trembled in fear and turned away from Vivian. At that point, she could not bring herself to look at her daughter.

Rachel's reaction served to confirm her worst fears, and immediately, her heart sank all the way into an abyss. Vivian anxiously grabbed onto Rachel's hand and asked her the same question again. "Mom, answer me! Am I your daughter?"

All Rachel could do was cry as she beheld Vivian. The tears fell onto her sheets and quickly covered them with wet stains. Rachel shook her head slightly and kept crying without saying a word.

"Mom, I'm not your biological daughter then?" Vivian's voice finally cracked into a loud sob. It would seem that God favored his other children more. What the doctor said was true, after all.

Rachel shook her head more vigorously this time before stopping to weep bitterly. She covered her mouth to mask the sounds and dared not look at Vivian at all.

So it's true? I'm not my mother's daughter. Vivian felt every last bit of strength leave her body as she sank into the chair behind her. With this came other revelations.

All this while, she wondered why Harvey took her to have a paternity test done. As it turned out, he was not her father after all. If she was not Rachel's daughter, how could she possibly be his daughter? Nothing made sense.

Then who the hell am I? Vivian immediately felt a furious ache in her temples. The more she thought about this, the more confounded she became.

It took a while for her to finally muster up the strength to look at Rachel, who lay in her bed trembling and crying. But Vivian also remembered everything Rachel did for her when she was a child.

Being in a single-parent family, Vivian grew up poor and could barely afford her tuition. Hence, Rachel did what she could to put food at the table and went to the extent of working up to two or three jobs at once.

To her knowledge, Rachel was never a materialistic or selfish person. Whatever the other children had, Rachel would do her best to obtain so that Vivian never felt left out. She did what she could so that nobody looked down on their family.

As she recalled all of this, Vivian knew that she could not find it in her to blame Rachel even if this was a heart-breaking revelation. She was not even Rachel's biological daughter, but Rachel did whatever she could to provide the best for her.

As such, her gratitude towards Rachel grew even more. Vivian could only thank Rachel for treating her as one of her own. If not for this, who knows where I'll end up today? Would I still meet Finnick? Would I have the life that I have right now?

"Mom?" Vivian held back her sadness and wiped her tears before gently pulling Rachel closer to her. "Can you tell me who your biological daughter is?" She needed to obtain this information so that Rachel could be operated on as soon as possible.

However, Rachel could not stop crying. "Vivian, I'm sorry... I... I don't..." She then trailed off into an incoherent babble of words that Vivian could not understand.

Seeing Rachel so upset, Vivian could only assume that her daughter was dead. It was also possible that her daughter died at childbirth, which would explain why Vivian ended up in the picture.

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"Did your daughter pass away?" asked Vivian tentatively. She did not think it was an unreasonable guess.

Rachel only wept harder and shook her head. In her distress, she kept mouthing the word "No."

Vivian did not understand what Rachel meant by "no," so she did what she could to coax the truth out of Rachel. "Mom, the doctors have diagnosed you with leukemia, and you are in dire need of a bone marrow donor. Can you please just tell me where I can find your biological daughter?"

Vivian had assumed that Rachel's daughter was no longer alive, based on her reaction alone. But what was Rachel refusing to tell her?

Rachel then looked at Vivian in shock. "Leukemia? How? How is this possible?"

"A while ago, the hospital called me and said that you had been diagnosed with leukemia. They said I had to find a compatible bone marrow donor so that they can operate on you as soon as possible." Vivian sighed and took Rachel's hand in hers. "I figured that since I am your daughter, I could be your donor instead. But I never expected to find out..."

Vivian trailed off and choked back a sob. Suddenly, words failed her.

She struggled to hold back her tears before continuing. "The reason why I kept it from you was that I didn't want you to feel depressed. It would take a toll on your body. Your only hope now is to locate your biological daughter and ask her to be your donor. Can you tell me where to find her?"

Vivian did not expect Rachel to react that poorly after hearing her justification. Rachel shook her head and barely breathed out the words "I can't!"

However, Rachel's reluctance only worried Vivian further. "Mom, this is serious. Your child might be the only one who can save your life. Please tell me where she is? I'll go look for her."

"Vivian! You mustn't go looking for her!" In a panic, Rachel suddenly held Vivian's arm as tightly as she could.

"But why not?" Vivian was now certain that Rachel knew exactly where her child was but seemed reluctant to disclose her whereabouts.

Why won't she let me go? Did something bad happen? It has to be it. Why would she abandon her own child and raise me instead?

However, the only thing on Vivian's mind at the moment was to track down Rachel's long-lost daughter.

"Don't ask me anymore, please. I beg of you!"

Vivian was even more puzzled by Rachel's actions. "If I don't, how will we treat your illness? Your life is in danger, Mom!"

"I don't care! I don't need a cure! I don't need to be cured!" Rachel cried and shook her head. "You needn't worry anymore. Just leave me be!"

"Mom!" Vivian was dumbfounded. "I'm not your biological daughter, but you raised me. You're still my mom, and nothing will change that. If you die, what will I do?"

Rachel then hugged Vivian close to her. "Oh, I'm sorry, Vivian... I'm so sorry!"

Patting Rachel on the back, Vivian sobbed and said, "It's okay, Mom. You raised me, and I'm only doing what's right. Now please tell me where she is! I can't lose you!"

"Vivian, stop. Don't ask me anymore. I won't tell you." Rachel slowly pushed Vivian away and wiped her tears. "If I've only got a few days left, so be it."

"Mom, how can you think so? What is it that's so bad that you can't even tell me? I'm begging you."

But Rachel still refused to let it slide. "I'm tired, Vivian. You should stop asking me about her. I... need to rest now, so maybe you should leave me alone for a bit."

Before Vivian could say anything further, Rachel had already turned towards the other side.