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"Uh..." Ben spaced out for a moment. "Nancy Gold?"

"Yes, that's her name."

The subordinate had remained in the villa long-term, so he did not know Nancy.

"Give me a moment. I'll go talk to Mr. Nacht."

"Okay."

Ben hurriedly made his way to Zachary's study.

By then, Rodney had finished drafting the new supplementary agreement and was letting Zachary go through it.

"Mr. Nacht, Ms. Gold is here," Ben reported. "She's waiting outside in the courtyard.

"How did she find this place?" Zachary frowned.

"I don't know," Ben answered awkwardly. "But I guess your residence isn't that big of a secret to those in the corporate world. They'd be able to find you if they tried hard enough."

Zachary fell silent for a few seconds before instructing, "Tell her to have a seat in the garden. I'll be right there."

"Yes, Sir." Ben quickly did as told.

After checking the agreement and leaving Rodney a few more words, Zachary changed his clothes and headed to the garden's dining area.

Nancy sat on the chair elegantly, her eyes downcast as if she was deep in thought.

"Ms. Gold," Zachary greeted as he walked over, and the woman jumped to her feet in response. "Mr. Nacht! I'm terribly sorry for bothering you."

"How did you know where I live?" he asked with a smile.

"I-I found out from other people," Nancy answered, feeling slightly abashed. "I'm sorry. I know it's not right, but I..."

Unable to continue her sentence, she bit her lip in embarrassment.

Zachary understood what she meant. They were getting along well during their meeting back then—until Louis showed up and ruined everything. After that, he stopped replying to her texts or picking up her calls.

That was why she could not wait any longer and came over.

"I do feel bad about our past two meetups being cut off short, so let me treat you to a meal today. You can decide where to go," Zachary offered gracefully.

"Really?" Nancy was elated. "How about right here at your place?" she asked hesitantly.

"We have guests here, and the kids are around, so it's not too convenient right now." Zachary rejected her straight out. "You like the sea, don't you? Let's head there instead."

"Sure thing." Nancy nodded fervently. Even if Zachary had denied her request to dine at his place, the fact that he was willing to take her out to the sea meant she would have plenty of alone time with him.

Turning around, Zachary ordered, "Ben, go and make the arrangements."

"Understood, Sir." Ben went off at once.

"Let's ao."

After informing Hanna of his activities, Zachary entered the car with Nancy.

Robbie furrowed his brows as he caught sight of them through his window from upstairs. "Who is that woman?" he asked the maid next to him.

"She seems to be a friend of Mr. Nacht," the maid answered.

It only took Johann one glance to recognize the woman. "That's Ms. Gold from Koandria. She's the young female vice-president of Rockenan Group. In the past two years, she has grown quite popular in the corporate world."

"Oh." Robbie said nothing more.

"Don't worry about the affairs of grown-ups," Johann remarked with a smile. "Come, let's continue where we left off."

"Okay." Robbie put his thoughts aside and resumed his discussion with Johann on his latest invention.

Meanwhile, Zachary's car headed straight down the mountain in the direction of the South Sea.

Inside the vehicle, the jovial Nancy talked about some light topics with Zachary.

The man would respond briefly from time to time—until they got to the subject of the Gymnasium Project in Pillere. "I'm guessing Sir Robert's approached you within the past two days?" he asked.

"He has." She nodded. "The terms were extremely favorable, and he was hoping I'd invest in it. But I turned him down."

"Huh? Why?" Zachary was slightly taken aback.

"If it were just a matter of usual business rivalries, I certainly wouldn't have passed up the offer," Nancy answered candidly. "But this has something to do with Ms. Lindberg. She's your wife, and I don't want to cause you any trouble because of that."

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"Well, it's not like it'd be that much of a trouble..." Zachary felt a little guilty. "But still, thank you."

"Not at all. This is just a matter of my own principles. It has nothing to do with you." Nancy smiled. "Besides, you've never mentioned it to me. I just didn't want to be entangled with it."

"I see," he replied.

"Mr. Nacht, the truth is, I came over today to—"

A white car drove by them before Nancy could even finish her sentence.

Zachary instinctively glanced in its direction. That's Louis' white Bentley!

"Turn the car around!" he immediately ordered with furrowed brows.

"Yes, Sir." The subordinate quickly made a U-turn.

Nancy stilled for a moment before asking, "Did you leave something behind, Mr. Nacht?" Astonishment was evident in her voice.

"Sorry, but I don't think I'll be able to treat you to a meal today." Still frowning, Zachary said, "I'll drop you off at the road ahead. Let's take a rain check."

"But..." The woman wanted to say something but held her tongue at the last moment. Trying to be understanding, she replied, "It's all right; I understand. Take care of your matters. Remember to contact me when you're done."

"Okay," Zachary replied regretfully, "I'll call you."

"Sure thing." Nancy smiled warmly. She always handled her emotions well, no matter the situation.

As the car stopped in front, she got off and entered her own vehicle parked by the roadside.

Zachary's car headed back to the mountain in Northridge's direction.

As Nancy stood at the side of the road and watched the man's vehicle speed away, a look of disappointment slowly replaced the smile on her face.

That was the third time her date with Zachary was interjected midway.

And every single time, it was because of Charlotte.

"I think that was Sir Louis' car," said her subordinate. "Apparently, Ms. Lindberg lives in Northridge. Mr. Nacht probably went back after seeing that Sir Louis was about to meet her."

"I know that."

Nancy's face darkened, and she could no longer conceal the grimness in her eyes.

"Then..." The subordinate glanced at her cautiously.

"We'll wait right here for Sir Louis to head down," she commanded as she got into the car.

"Yes, Ma'am."

When Charlotte awoke in the morning, her hand continued to ache terribly. With Lupine's help, she freshened up and got dressed before heading downstairs together for breakfast.

The house was silent as Morgan had taken the three children down the mountain to play. For some reason, Charlotte could not get used to it.

"You should drink less coffee, Ms. Lindberg. It's not good for your stomach." Lupine reminded kindly.

"I'm sluggish now because I didn't sleep well last night." Charlotte rubbed her temples. "I need an energy boost since I have to deal with a matter today."

"A matter? What matter?"

Lupine was rather surprised as there was not much else for them to do apart from looking after the kids.

"Even if you don't go looking for trouble actively, trouble will find its way to your doorstep."

Charlotte stared at her phone. She had received a missed call from Robert early in the morning but had yet to return his call. Therefore, she had a feeling that he would soon show up at her doorstep.

"What trouble—"

"Ms. Lindberg, Sir Robert has arrived," a female bodyguard hastily announced before Lupine could inquire further.

"How many men did he bring with him?" asked Charlotte.

"Three subordinates. Sir Louis isn't with them."

"Let them in."

Charlotte put her cutlery down and shot Lupine a look.

With that, the latter immediately gathered some forces and placed them on alert.

Robert had completely burned his bridges when he ordered his men to capture Charlotte right after she left.

Since he had the audacity to appear before her again, Charlotte certainly had to have her guard up.

The entrance to the courtyard opened, and the white Bentley made its way in.

Lupine brought a group of people to welcome them. The car doors opened, and Robert alighted with three subordinates. "Charlotte! It sure took me a while to find this place," he said, wearing a gentle smile on his face.

"Long time no see, Sir Robert!" Charlotte remained seated on the couch in the living hall and gazed at the man frostily. "I didn't think you'd spend so much time finding your way here. To what do I owe the pleasure?"

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"Can't I drop by to see you as your elder?"

Sweeping his gaze across his surroundings, Robert evidently relaxed when he noticed there were hardly any bodyguards around. "Are the kids not home? No wonder your place seems so much quieter."

He knew how much the children's safety mattered to Charlotte. The woman would always have a large group of bodyguards accompanying the children whenever they head out.

At that moment, only three bodyguards remained in the villa.

"You can stop looking around now." Charlotte saw right through him.

"Even just three of them are more than enough."

Robert cleared his throat and smiled sheepishly. "There's no need to be so hostile! I came here to discuss the project, not start a fight."

"Your memory seems to be rather lacking," she commented with a smirk. "Was it not you who ordered those men to capture me just a while ago?"

"I was merely inviting you back to our manor. Louis can't bear to lose you," he declared brazenly. "You're the paranoid one for assuming that they were going to hurt you."

Charlotte sneered. What a pretentious old fart.

"Well? Are you not going to invite me in?" Robert cocked an eyebrow.

"Of course I am. This way, please," she replied, making a gesture.

As Robert walked in, Lupine stood in his subordinates' way.

The haughty men were about to force their way in when Robert shot them a glance. With that, they retreated and waited outside the door.

Two female bodyguards kept their eyes on them, whereas Lupine watched over Charlotte inside the building.

Unbeknownst to Robert, there were two other bodyguards on the alert upstairs.

"Come on, now, Charlotte. There's no need to be so antagonistic toward an elder, is there?" Robert began to play nice as soon as he sat down. "Danrique and I are such good friends, after all!"

"Save it." Charlotte was not having any of his nonsense. "If you have something to say, get to the point."

"All right." He nodded with his lips curled. "In that case, I'll stop beating around the bush."

Then, he placed a document on the table. "Once you sign this, we won't owe each other anything, nor will we have anything to do with one another ever again."

The woman took the document and glanced at it before scoffing. "How bold of you to ask me to back out of the project just like this? What about my twenty billion worth of investment? Is that free money for you?"

"The fact that you could even invest in the project in the first place was thanks to Louis' arrangements in private, anyway, and you've benefitted

from it too," Robert said matter-of-factly. "Besides, it was your fault that the wedding was canceled, and this has caused irreparable damages to the Laurent family as well as Louis' mental wellbeing. Twenty billion isn't too much to ask for, don't you think?"

Lupine fumed as she listened to his words. If Morgan were around, she would have cursed at the man out loud for being shameless.

"Ha!" Charlotte scoffed. "First of all, I have never gained anything out of the project. Secondly, I believe I'm not the only one responsible for the cancelation of the wedding. Have you forgotten all the nasty things Lady Sherlyn and Diana did? In fact, you should instead be thanking me for saving your reputation by keeping all these incidents a secret."

"Diana was the one behind all those schemes. What does my wife have to do with them?" Robert denied that Sherlyn masterminded the whole matter. "And what do you mean by that? Are you threatening me?"

"I was hoping we could part amicably, but you're the one harboring malicious intents. Don't blame me for treating you in the same manner then." Charlotte cocked an eyebrow and retorted. "If you want me to back out of the project, sure, I can do that. But only if you return my investment to me. Otherwise, please leave!"

"I'm surprised at the dire state Lindberg Corporation is now in," Robert commented mockingly. "To think that you're even fighting over a mere twenty billion. I suppose Mr. Lindberg is at his wits' end now!"

"It doesn't matter if it's twenty billion or just twenty. What's mine will always be mine, and no one gets to take it away from me." Charlotte gritted her teeth. "Also, my brother will be back. Just you wait!"

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Hearing that, Robert could not help but tense up slightly.

Is there a new lead on Danrique's whereabouts? No, that can't be. The Lindbergs are declining now. He's rumored to have died in an explosion while out at sea, so there's no way he'll come back!

At the thought of that, he continued to threaten Charlotte, "We'll talk about that when he actually comes back. But for now, you'd better sign this contract, or else..."

"Or else what?" the woman barked, raising an eyebrow haughtily.

"You're all alone now. I can do whatever I want to you, and I don't even need to do it myself." Robert sneered. "Do you really think a few female bodyguards will be able to protect you?"

"You..."

"They can't, but I can."

Suddenly, a cold, dignified voice came from outside. Robert froze momentarily before turning his head, only to see Zachary striding into the house with a frosty expression on his face.

"Zachary..."

The older man turned ghastly pale in an instant. He had gone looking for the other shareholders after parting with Divine Corporation on bad terms, but no one else had dared to budge without Zachary's permission.

That was why he had to resort to coercing Charlotte instead.

Robert had assumed that Charlotte would give up her investment sum out of desperation to protect herself, but he did not expect her to be this strong-willed.

Just as he was about to make things even more difficult for her, Zachary decided to show up.

"What are you doing here?"

Charlotte was just as astonished to see Zachary. She had felt conflicted upon receiving word early this morning that Nancy was headed to Southridge. Nancy was so brilliant and proactive that it was only a matter of time until Zachary fell for her—or so she thought.

Yet, here he was instead.

"I was heading down the mountain when I saw Sir Robert's car, so I decided to join in on the fun."

Zachary sat next to Charlotte, picked up that document, and sneered upon browsing through it.

"Which lawyer did you hire to draw up such an outrageous contract, Sir Robert? You went ahead and acted on your own without my approval. This is against the rules, you know?"

"Let's talk about this in private, Zachary." Robert's eyebrows were deeply furrowed.

"Haven't we already done that yesterday? Don't you remember what I told you? I guess you still haven't managed to comprehend my words."

Zachary had implied that Charlotte was someone that even he dared not cross, so he hoped that Robert would be a little more sincere and call a truce with her.

Yet, the older man had done the complete opposite and threatened Charlotte instead.

This made Zachary boil with rage.

"I—"

Refusing to listen to Robert's nonsense, he interjected, "That's enough. I wanted to give you a chance and let you settle this on your own, but clearly, you don't respect my opinions at all. In that case, I'll take care of things here on your behalf."

"Zachary, w-what are you talking about?" Robert asked in bewilderment. "What do you intend to do?"

"I'm going to call upon all the other shareholders and hold a meeting three days later. You'll get your answer by then." Zachary tossed the document into the older man's arms. "But for now, I want you to take this contract with you and leave!"

"Zachary—"

"Send him off!" Without even giving him a chance to speak, Zachary chased him out.

"Yes, Sir!" Lupine and Ben immediately walked over and stood on each side of Robert. "This way, Sir Robert."

Livid, Robert flushed. However, he dared not act rashly and held onto the contract before leaving grudgingly with his men.

Only after Robert's car had left the courtyard did Charlotte retract her gaze to look at Zachary. "Thank you," she said, her eyes filled with unfathomable emotions.

"Leave this to me." Zachary glanced at her before turning to Ben. "Get some people to guard this place. No outsider is allowed to come near without my permission."

"Yes, Sir." Ben quickly did as instructed.

"What are you doing?" Charlotte asked in shock.

"Don't you get it?" Zachary frowned in displeasure. "He treated you like that because he thought you have no one to lean on. But with my men here, no one will dare pick a fight with you again."