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With that, he released Nellie and stood up. "I'm going into the mountains."

He did not know what Fiona was planning to do by taking Nigel hostage, but since it had already happened, he had no choice but to counter.

Joshua turned around and glanced at Nellie with an expression of determination. "Don't worry. no matter what happens, I 'll bring Nigel back with me."

As soon as he said this, Joshua strode out of the basement.

"Joshua! " Luna's voice rang out from behind him as soon as he exited the room.

Joshua turned around.

Luna was still standing within the room. She reached out her arm toward him and said, "Pull me out of here. I'm going with you."

Joshua glanced at Luna, taking in her thin frame. A few days ago, she was so weak that she could not even walk by herself, but at this moment, she was willing to go into the mountains with him amid a thunderstorm.

Joshua remained silent for a moment but did not reach out to grab her hand. "I can go by myself."

The weather was so bad that he did not want her to risk hurting herself if there was a natural disaster.

"Why do you want to go by yourself?" Luna narrowed her eyes and fixated her frosty gaze on him. "Are you going to save Nigel or your precious Ms. Blake?"

A pained expression flashed briefly through Joshua's eyes.

He could not believe that at this moment, Luna still thought the reason he wanted to go into the mountains was to save Fiona.

Did she trust him that little?

He lowered his head and glanced at Luna once more.

The look in her eyes was crystal clear and determined, as though telling him that she did not trust him at all.

“I have to go and find Nigel myself. I don’t trust anyone else.” Luna’s gaze was unfaltering. “If you don’t want to pull me up, nor take me along with you, Mr. Lynch, then I’ll go by myself.”

With that, she gripped the railing on the basement wall with both her hands.

However, Joshua could not help but notice her left hand—the one with the broken little finger—start to tremble vigorously.

Beads of sweat collected at Luna’s forehead.

It was clear she was in tremendous pain, but she still clutched the railing tightly in an attempt to pull herself out of the basement.

Joshua’s expression darkened at this sight. Finally, he let out an exhale and could not bear to watch any longer, so he strode over, grabbed hold of Luna’s right arm, and pulled her out of the basement.

As soon as she landed back on her feet, Luna let out an exhale of relief. Her entire head was covered in sweat, but she wasted no time tidying herself up. Instead, she stormed out of the villa, dragging Joshua behind her.

The two of them made their way into the mountains according to the directions Nellie had given.

Before long, Luna caught sight of a shoe snagged on a tree branch. It was Nigel’s shoe!

Luna bit down on her lip as soon as she saw this. She knew that Nigel had left this shoe here on purpose so that they could find him.

She immediately tucked the shoe away and followed Joshua on their remaining journey.

The mountain trail was steep and treacherous. On top of that, the bad weather conditions made the hike even more challenging than usual. Luna was almost blown off the cliff by the landslide and strong wind numerous times. However, every time this happened, she managed to evade harm by either her own determination or with Joshua’s help.

Following the trail that Nigel had left behind, the two of them soon arrived at the peak of the mountain. “I didn’t think you’d arrive so soon.” Fiona’s cold voice rang out as

soon as they arrived at the mountaintop.

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When Luna lifted her head and took in the scene before her, she was so shocked that she almost passed out.

Nigel was tied to a giant rock at the edge of the cliff, his feet bare and his entire body hovering over a seemingly endless drop.

Meanwhile, Fiona leaned gracefully against the rock, her eyebrows raised slightly, a taunting smile playing on her lips.

She was holding a sharp knife in her hand, the light glinting off the blade in the rain.

"I thought you needed more time to catch up with me."

Fiona sighed and lowered her head to fiddle with the knife. "I was even betting with Nigel on when you'd arrive. For every hour that you're late, I'll cut off one of the ropes holding him here."

With that, she turned and counted the number of ropes holding Nigel onto the rock. "Eight ropes. I've already cut one off, so there's only seven left."

Fiona turned and smiled at Joshua. "Look, Joshua; look how nice I'm treating your son. I prepared eight pieces of rope so that you could see him one last time. One rope for each hour, so eight hours in total. Eight hours is more than enough for you to bid him farewell! "

Luna was so unnerved by the scene before her, as well as how despicable Fiona both looked and sounded, that she almost lost her balance.

She could not fathom how malicious this woman was!

Fiona was insane!

Joshua pulled Luna into his arms and lifted his head to stare at Fiona coldly. "What are you trying to do? "

"Nothing much, just taking his life." Fiona curled her lips into a smirk and gazed at Joshua impassively. "You should know better than anyone why I'm taking Nigel's life, right?"

Joshua's arm, which was still wrapped around Luna, tightened upon hearing this, and his knuckles turned

white.

He knew what Fiona was talking about.

She wanted to kill Nigel because the bone marrow inside him used to belong to her.

Joshua knew that better than anyone else.

He clenched his teeth and continued to stare at Fiona.

“Whatever you want, I can give it to you.”

“Is that so?” Fiona clutched her face with one hand and fixated her calm gaze on Joshua’s face. “That was what you said to me in the past. You told me that you’d be with me until I died. Are you going back on your promise now?”

Joshua suppressed the rage in his heart and replied, “The reason I made that promise was that I thought you had a fatal illness and had only one year to live.”

Fiona sneered. “Does this mean you’re going to abandon me now that you found out I „m not dying anymore?”

Luna was right, Joshua. You’re a flighty, irresponsible scumbag. I used to think that if I stayed by your side, I „d one day be able to steal your heart, but I now understand how naive I was to think that.”

With that, she fiddled with the knife in her hand and lowered the blade to one of the ropes restraining Nigel— This scene made Luna anxious. Then, just as Fiona’s blade was about to cut the rope loose, Luna cried out in a shrill voice, “Fiona! If you want to take your revenge, then take it out on me! “

She bit down on her lip, released herself from Joshua’s arms, and fixated her determined gaze on Fiona. “I was the one who tried to expose your lies, and I was the one who tried to collect evidence against you! None of this has anything to do with my son. You...”

Luna glanced at Nigel who, at this moment, was staring down at the endless abyss beneath him, his face pale with terror. Even though he was usually a calm and mature child, at this moment, his face was as pale as a ghost.

After all, he was only six years old. How fearless could he possibly be?

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Luna stared at Nigel and let out an exhale. "If you still want to blame Joshua and me for everything that happened, then toss me into the abyss instead! My son is still young, so please don't make his life difficult! I'm willing to give you my life in exchange for his!"

Fiona could not help but snicker when she heard this. She cackled in laughter as she sliced through another one of the ropes. "You want to give me your life in exchange for Nigel's? How naive are you, Luna? Although I'm upset at what you did..."

She raised her eyebrows and sneered. "You're worth nothing to Joshua at all, but it's different for Nigel. Joshua's blood is coursing through Nigel's veins at this moment, and he's his offspring, after all. If I keep Nigel here, it's equivalent to keeping Joshua's heart here. Why would I let Nigel—such an important person—go in exchange for a worthless woman like you?"

Luna's entire body stiffened upon hearing this. After a moment, she bit down on her lip.

Fiona was right.

She was worth nothing to Joshua at all. He did not care about her.

As soon as she caught sight of the disappointed look in Luna's eyes, a glint of triumph flashed through Fiona's heart. This was what she wanted to achieve!

Fiona knew that if she did not come to Yellowstone Village to take Nigel hostage, she would not be able to get out of this alive!

This morning, she had received a phone call from Christian, saying that he had found evidence of her murdering Violet, as well as proof of her plotting Shaun Lewis' murder alongside Dr. Robert.

Both Violet and Shaun Lewis' deaths were her ideas. Even though Violet's fall was an accident, Fiona had been behind this all along.

On the day of Violet's death, she and Violet had actually plotted to shove Christian off the rooftop together.

Fiona had hidden a camera in the corner of the rooftop.

Initially, she had planned to let Violet push Christian off the roof so that she could use the footage to threaten her.

Her plan was intricate and perfectly thought-out.

However, Christian was not a predictable person.

In the end, the one who fell off the roof was Violet.

Fiona was afraid that Violet would come clean to the police about their plan to murder Christian, so she brought the camera along with her to the hospital, intending to use it to threaten Violet, but to her surprise, she accidentally caught the incident of Dr. Robert choking Violet to death on video.

Dr. Robert soon discovered that she was there.

After that, Shaun Lewis found out about some secrets he should not have known, so Fiona and Dr. Robert planned his accident together.

Fiona thought that no one would find out about all this, but unbeknownst to her, Dr. Robert had kept all evidence of their wrongdoings hidden in his office at the hospital abroad.

The night before, Christian had broken into Dr. Robert's office and managed to obtain the evidence.

Fiona knew that aside from her lies to Joshua, her involvement in Violet and Shaun Lewis' murder would soon be exposed to the public. Since there was no way of getting out of prosecution, she decided that she would take things into her own hands and kill herself before the police caught her!

Of course, if she could manage to drive a wedge between Joshua and Luna before she died, that would be the cherry on top.

As soon as she thought of this, she curled her lips into a sneer. "What's wrong? Are you unwilling to face the truth?"

With that, she lowered her head to fiddle with the knife in her hand while chuckling at the same time. "Why don't you tell her yourself, Joshua? Tell her what she means to you."

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Joshua narrowed his eyes.

He knew that Fiona's question—and her fiddling with that knife—was a form of threat.

He knew what answer Fiona wanted to hear, so he let out an exhale and curled his lips into a smirk. "She means nothing to me. I've never loved her in the past, in the present, nor will I ever do in the future.

"The only reason I treated her kindly is that she bore three children for me, that's all."

Nigel, who was still tied onto the rock, clenched his fists as soon as he heard Joshua's words.

Meanwhile, the color drained from Luna's face. Even though she knew Joshua was simply telling the truth, but...

It was one thing to know this but an entirely different thing altogether to hear those cold, heartless words tumbling out of Joshua's mouth.

He had never loved her, and she had never meant anything to him at all.

Luna let out an exhale and tried to force herself not to fixate on this. All of her attention should be focused on saving Nigel instead, but no matter how hard she tried, she still could not help feeling an ache in her heart. After all...

This was the man she had loved for many years.

She loved him unconditionally for so long, but he had never taken her love and sacrifices to heart.

There was no way she could dismiss and not feel hurt by all of this.

On the other hand, Fiona could not help but let out a cackle when she heard Joshua's words. She knew better than anyone that Joshua was lying through his teeth, but she still enjoyed watching Luna's disappointment.

"Well, since you're so honest, Mr. Lynch. I want to give you a reward." With that, Fiona sliced through another piece of rope holding Nigel together.

Now there were only four ropes holding Nigel in the air. His tiny frame dangled above the steep drop, shaking slightly in the rain and wind.

Luna was so distraught by this sight that her eyes reddened. She had no idea how to stop this crazy woman from hurting her son.

Luna did not dare lunge forward to save Nigel, lest she startled Fiona and caused her to cut through all the ropes altogether.

Yet, at the same time, she could not sit by and let time pass because Fiona had said that each rope would represent an hour of their time. With only four ropes left, this meant they had only four hours left to save Nigel!

Luna bit down on her lip and pleaded, her voice shaking, "Fiona, if you want to kill someone, then kill me, please? Please don't hurt Nigel... He's only six! The one who searched for evidence to expose you was me, not him!" With that, she let out an exhale and extended her left hand with a look of determination. "If I remember correctly, you were the one who ordered the bodyguard to crush my finger, right? He even told me that for every day I continued to remain in the mental asylum, he'd crush one of my fingers."

Luna lifted her head to fixate her unfaltering gaze on Fiona. "I've been your target since the start, so if I'm willing to self-mutilate my remaining nine fingers in front of you, will you let Nigel go?"

Not only Fiona, but even Joshua and Nigel's eyes widened in shock upon hearing this. Nigel, who had been silent all this while, immediately started screaming, "Mommy! What nonsense are you talking about?! Your hand... You're a designer!"

The fear, terror, and concern over Luna's safety finally made him crack. He stared at Luna with tears streaming down his face. "Mommy, I'm not scared of dying. I'm not scared at all."

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"When I was diagnosed with a terminal illness, I was mentally prepared to die. Having the opportunity to have a bone marrow transplant and prolong my life to spend time with my Mommy and Nellie, I'm already satisfied."

Nigel's tears were mixed with the rainwater. His voice was so hoarse that he did not sound like a child anymore. "Maybe Neil just misses me too much, Mommy. You don't need to hurt yourself nor sacrifice your life for me... Honestly, I don't care about that much! "

Luna felt her heart ache upon hearing these words and could not hold back her tears any longer.

She bit down on her lip and picked up the nearest rock she could grab, wanting to smash her own fingers.

"Fiona, if I really break all remaining nine fingers of mine, will you promise to let Nigel go and take me instead?"

Seeing how desperate Luna and Nigel were, Fiona let out a vicious laugh. "Alright ! If you really crush all nine of your remaining fingers, then I'll let Nigel go and let you take his place! "

She stared at Luna's hand, her face etched with a despicable grin. "Come on! You know, I have never seen anyone smashing their own fingers with a rock before. You can be the first! But remember, it must be completely crushed. I do have medical knowledge, so don't you dare try to lie to me."

Luna closed her eyes, and suddenly, even though her fingers were still intact, she could already feel the sharp pain spreading through her hands. The pain reminded her of her experience in the mental asylum, the pain she felt when her little finger was smashed, the kind of pain that tore you apart as if every single cell in your body were resisting it.

However, she knew the only way to save her child was to satisfy Fiona.

Nothing was more important than her child's life, not even her own fingers.

The man she loved dearly never loved her back, but these children brought nothing but love and kindness into her life. Whether it was Nigel, Neil, or Nellie, all of them were her precious children.

She could not lose any of them...not even a single one!

As soon as she thought of this, Luna gritted her teeth, summoning every ounce of strength and courage in her body, and swung the rock down toward her hand—

“Luna! Are you out of your mind?”

Right before the rock hit her fingers, Joshua lunged forward, grabbed hold of her hand, and tossed the rock away.

As soon as the rock landed on the ground with a thud, Fiona cut another one of the ropes with her knife.

With that, only three ropes held Nigel up, dangling him over the cliff.

Nigel’s body dipped downward without warning, but he managed to grab the remaining ropes to stop himself from falling off the cliff.

Luna felt as though her heart would plunge down the cliff at any moment with Nigel. She bit down on her lip, pushed Joshua away, and lunged toward Fiona.

Just after a few steps, however, Fiona put her knife on the three remaining pieces of rope and threatened, “Stop! Don’t you dare come any closer! “

Luna froze. She was so nervous that her legs gave out, and she kneeled on the ground, begging, “Fiona Please tell me what you want... I’ll give you anything that I can...”

Fiona narrowed her eyes. “What I want, you can never give.”

“Then how about me?” Joshua let out an exhale and asked, “Am I able to give you what she can’t?”

Fiona slowly narrowed her eyes slightly but did not reply. Joshua continued, still staring at her, “The reason you’re doing all this is that we found out about your fake disease. On the other hand... Christian called the cops on you abroad, didn’t he?”

Fiona’s entire body lurched when she heard this.

“What if I can protect you and save you from going to jail? What if I’m willing to marry you? Do you still want to do all this?”

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As soon as Joshua finished his sentence, it was so silent that only the sound of the wind could be heard.

Fiona narrowed her eyes and first glanced coldly at

Joshua, then at Luna. Then, all of a sudden, she sneered.
“You’re lying to me.”

She turned to look at Nigel who, at this moment, had only three pieces of rope holding him onto the giant rock, and curled her lips into a bitter smile. “There’s no going back anymore, now that I’ve done something like this! “
“How do you know that?” Joshua let out an exhale and continued, “Fiona, you know better than anyone that if there’s someone out there who can help you get out of this and guarantee you an entire lifetime of safety, that person is me.”

With that, he took a step forward and said, staring at Fiona with a gentle expression. “Fiona, I know that you’re trying to get your revenge by taking Nigel’s life alongside yours, but at the same time, you’ll be dying, too. I don’t believe you when you say you don’t have anything left to look forward to in this world. If you release Nigel right now and let Luna take him away from Banyan City... I promise I’ll treat you well in the future.”

Fiona bit down on her lip upon hearing this.

It was not that she wanted to die. After all, she was only 20, so she still had a long way to go in life.

However, she could not stand living her life in poverty anymore. This was why as soon as she found out her bone marrow was compatible with Nigel’s, she enlisted Dr. Robert’s help to forge a diagnosis of terminal illness so that she could stay by Joshua’s side for the rest of her life.

She did not want to die either, but...

Fiona lifted her head and stared at Joshua with red-rimmed eyes.

“You’re lying to me; you can’t possibly protect me. If you wanted to, you wouldn’t have tried to expose me, and I wouldn’t even be in this situation in the first place! “

Joshua’s expression darkened when he saw Fiona’s response. He knew that his guesses were correct.

Fiona was doing this simply because she thought she had no other choice. In reality, she did not want to die at all.

She was a greedy woman.

How could a greedy person possibly give up living,

knowing that there was wealth and prosperity still left in this world?

Joshua let out an exhale and tried to steady his voice.

“Fiona, if you still want to live, believe me when I say I’m your only choice.”

With that, he took out a contract from his pocket and proffered it to Fiona. “If you don’t believe my words, then we can sign a contract. If after you let go of Nigel and returned home with me, and I failed to protect and marry you, then all of the assets belonging to Lynch Group will be transferred to your name.”

Fiona widened her eyes in shock upon hearing this.

Luna, too, furrowed her brows. When did Joshua even have time to draw up this contract?

She had been with him the entire day, but how did she not notice him doing this?

Besides...

To transfer all of Lynch Group’s assets to Fiona’s name if he failed to protect her...was a heavy bet to place.

“Come nearer. I can’t see clearly!” Fiona squinted to read the contract in Joshua’s hand, but because the words were too small, she could not make out anything at all.

Joshua took one, then two steps forward, his calm gaze still fixated on Fiona.

On his third step, however, Fiona suddenly brought the knife up and warned, as though she recalled something, “Stop!”

She could not let Joshua come any closer.

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Joshua was a strong man. Fiona knew that if he came up to her, there was a very high chance she would not be able to win in a physical fight against him.

Therefore, she narrowed her eyes, put the knife closer to the rope tied on Nigel, and threatened, “ Wrap the contract around a rock and toss it over! “

Joshua froze in his step, and his expression darkened as soon as he heard this.

However, he still followed suit. He crouched down to pick

up a rock and chuckled. "What are you worried about? I've promised to marry you and vowed to protect you. Do you really think I'll break that promise?"

"If you act so defensively against me, what will our future be like?"

There was a hint of kindness in his harsh, emotionless words.

Joshua had never talked to Luna like this before, so she was puzzled for a moment, trying to figure out if Joshua meant it or if he was simply trying to trick Fiona.

However, one thing was clear: Joshua had never displayed this warmth and kindness toward her at all.

Joshua put both the contract and the rock into a plastic bag and tossed it over to Fiona as instructed. The rock landed at her feet with a thud.

Just as Fiona bent down to pick up the bag, Joshua turned to shoot Luna a meaningful look.

When Fiona stood up again, he turned his head back to face her and smiled at her.

Fiona opened the contract, and there it was, clearly written, (Joshua Lynch will protect Fiona Blake against any foreign police that wanted to prosecute her from the crime she committed and will marry her and take care of her until the end of her days.

[If he fails to achieve any of the clauses, all assets down to every single penny of Lynch Group will be hereby transferred to her name.]

Seeing the contract in her hand, Fiona suddenly felt like changing her mind.

She did not want to die at all. What if...

What if Joshua could truly help her avoid prosecution for the murder of Violet and Shaun Lewis and take care of her for the rest of her life?

If he kept to his promise, why would she choose to die?

However...

She lifted her head and stared at Joshua with a cold expression. Although she was faltering, she knew she could not show her true emotions. "Why did you draw up this contract?"

Joshua replied without any hesitation, "You know what I

care about.

“When we first met you, you already knew what I cared about most in this world. None of that has changed.”

Fiona’s hands started shaking.

When she and Joshua first met, he was trying to save Nigel’s life by getting a suitable bone marrow donor for his transplant. During that time, Joshua thought Fiona was dying from her disease, so when she asked him to be with her, he agreed without a second thought.

All this while, Joshua treated her like a princess, giving her nothing but the best.

Although he could not give her his love or physical intimacy, he had already provided the best for her.

Therefore...

If she let go of Nigel, would she and Joshua be able to return to what they used to be?

As soon as she thought of this, Fiona bit down on her lip. Although she knew that Joshua was a man of his word, she still did not think she could release Nigel just like that.

“If you think I’m lying and won’t be able to protect or take care of you, then you can sign this contract and take away all of my assets.” Joshua could tell that Fiona was hesitating, so he added, “There’s nothing for you to lose on signing this contract.”

Fiona fell into silence for a moment. Then, finally, she gave in to his words.

She put down the knife, lowered her head to grab the pen inside the plastic bag, and wanted to sign the contract. However, there seemed to be something wrong with the pen, and its ink came out a little choppy. Fiona furrowed her brows and struggled to put her name on the contract, looking a little frustrated. As soon as she lowered her head to sign the contract, Joshua narrowed his eyes and lunged toward her —

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Clang—!

Joshua kicked the knife a few meters away from Fiona.

Fiona suddenly felt that something was wrong as soon as she heard the sound of the knife landing on the ground. She immediately lifted her head from the contract and met Joshua's frosty gaze.

A split second later, Joshua locked Fiona's wrists behind her and pressed her down against the ground.

This sudden turn of events rendered Luna speechless for a moment before she finally came to and sprinted toward the edge of the cliff. She clung onto

Nigel and carefully untied the ropes holding him, lifting him from the rock once she finished.

Because the ropes were barely holding him up, Nigel summoned all his strength to keep his balance, so as soon as he was rescued, Nigel collapsed in Luna's arms limply. He heaved a deep sigh of relief and said, "Thank you, Mommy."

Nigel did not have any strength to walk. Knowing this, Luna pulled him closer in her arms and said in a choked voice, "It's fine. Everything's fine now.

Mommy can carry you..."

Just a short distance away, Joshua had pinned Fiona against the ground.

"Joshua Lynch!" Fiona screamed, staring at the half-signed contract on the ground. Then, she yelled with

every ounce of strength she had left, "You lied to me! You're a liar!"

Joshua's intention for drawing up this contract was never to protect her nor bring her home with him. He just wanted to trick her into letting her guard down and gain control of her while she was preoccupied with signing the contract!

How crooked!

"Takes one to know one," Joshua replied, letting out a chuckle. "Have you never lied to me before, Ms. Blake?"

She had lied about her terminal disease, convincing him she only had less than a year to live.

Joshua had believed all of her lies because he thought that a woman who was willing to donate her bone marrow to his son would never lie about dying. Alas, he was terribly mistaken!

Fiona's entire body stiffened when she heard this. She bit down on her lip but did not reply.

Luna, still holding onto Nigel, turned to glance at both of them.

Joshua furrowed his brows. "I can take care of her. Get Nigel down this mountain first; I'll catch up with you in a while."

Luna glanced at Joshua's pale face and asked, "Are you sure?"

Joshua nodded in reply.

The truth was, Joshua was utterly worn out by the whole situation at that point.

He went to the mental asylum with Luna this morning, then headed to the hospital to get a proper diagnosis for Fiona's illness, and finally headed to the scene of Dr. Robert's accident. He had spent the entire day running from one location to another, without even a single bite of food.

Later, as soon as he found out that Fiona had left for Yellowstone Village, he and his men came immediately. He even carried Luna across a flooded village and climbed a steep mountain with Luna on his back.

To go on like this for over ten hours without even stopping to replenish his energy had taken a tremendous physical toll on him. Not even a superhero could survive such intense physical exertion.

However, Joshua knew very well that if Luna and Nigel did not leave now, and if he lost control of Fiona...

Luna alone —along with an exhausted child —would have no fighting chance against Fiona.

At the thought of this, Joshua immediately perked up and stared at Luna. "Get Nigel off this mountain right now, and send Lucas and the rest up here."

Luna paused for a moment, then nodded.

However, after taking only a few steps, a crack of lightning flashed through the sky, catching Luna by surprise and tripping her. Together, she and Nigel tumbled straight into a giant puddle.

"Luna!"

After a few moments with no sign of either of them

getting up, Joshua started to panic and cried out, " Are you okay?"

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Luna crawled out of the puddle slowly. "I'm fine..."

She was fine, just a little exhausted.

After all, she had not eaten a single bite for more than ten hours.

Luna pulled Nigel out of the puddle, picked him up, and continued hiking down the mountain trail.

The mountain trail was wet and slippery from the rain, so Luna and Nigel fell a couple of times. With each fall, Joshua felt his heart ache.

Even Fiona, who was pressed against the ground, could feel the raw emotions passing through Joshua's body. Fiona saw an opportunity and decided to seize it. While Joshua was preoccupied with watching Luna and Nigel, Fiona summoned all the strength in her body and managed to release herself from Joshua's grip.

"I'll kill you!" Fiona's blood-curdling scream rang out from behind Luna.

Luna immediately paused, then turned around.

The scene before her rendered her utterly stunned, as though someone had set off a bomb inside her head.

At this moment, Fiona was holding the knife that Joshua had kicked away and engaged in a physical struggle with him. All Luna could see was the two of them fumbling around.

Fiona's knife pierced Joshua's arm a few times, drawing blood that seemed to trickle everywhere.

Joshua, who was usually tall and strong, was soaked in his own blood, struggling to gain the upper hand in this fight.

Luna bit down on her lip at this sight. She knew she could not just stand by and watch.

No matter how strong Joshua was, he was no match for a person clutching a deadly weapon!

Luna bit down on her lip and placed Nigel on the ground. "Mommy, go..." Nigel said earnestly, watching the scene

before him. "The only reason Mr. Lynch is in the situation now is that he tried to save me. Please be careful."

Luna nodded, then turned and sprinted back toward Joshua.

Joshua and Fiona were still engaged in their struggle at the top of the mountain.

"You lied to me, didn't you, Joshua?" Fiona sneered as she flung the knife around, trying to stab Joshua. "I'll bring you to hell with me! Even though I can't bring your son along, I can still bring you with me!

"You'll never get rid of me! You'll never be with Luna!" Joshua's strength had been depleted at this point. However, Fiona was weak, so he still had a fighting chance against her.

When Luna reached the mountain top, Joshua had already grabbed hold of Fiona's wrist, bending it and causing the knife to fall on the ground with a clang.

Fiona bit down on her lip nervously.

The only weapon she had had once again been taken out of her hands, and she knew she could not overpower Joshua either, but on top of that, Luna had arrived back at the scene as well...

She could not lose. She could not fail!

She knew that Joshua would not protect her, nor would he marry her.

If she got caught, she would be sent back overseas to face punishment for the crimes she had committed! She did not want to do that!

Violet and Shaun's deaths were due to fate. She could not take responsibility for their murders!

As soon as she thought of this, Fiona lifted her head to glance at the edge of the cliff behind Joshua.

The fight between both of them had led them toward the edge of the cliff. If either of them took even a single step, they would fall off the cliff and die.

If she and Joshua fell to their deaths together, then they would be together for the rest of eternity!

As soon as she thought of this, a glimmer of triumph flashed through Fiona's eyes.

"Joshua Lynch," she whispered, lifting her head to stare

at him, an evil smile playing on her lips. "Let's go to hell together!"

With that, she summoned all of the strength in her body and lunged toward Joshua, tipping the two of them over the edge—

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"Let's go to hell together!" Fiona yelled, sprinting toward Joshua and knocking him right over the edge of the cliff.

However, as soon as he realized he was falling, Joshua immediately let go of Fiona's hand and reached out to grab onto the rocks on the side of the mountain.

When Luna finally reached the mountain top, the only thing she could see was Joshua's arm, gripping the rock so hard that his veins popped.

However, because of extreme overexertion, the arm that was holding onto the rock slowly began to slip.

Luna immediately lunged over and grabbed hold of Joshua's hand with her own. "Joshua!"

Her hands gripped onto his tightly.

Joshua was so exhausted at this point that he could not even hold onto the rock anymore.

He had lost all of his strength in his upper body and could only rely on Luna to keep him from falling.

However, Luna's strength was limited too, and on top of that, Joshua's weight had pulled almost her entire body to the edge of the cliff.

Joshua furrowed his brows and sighed, seeing the veins on Luna's forehead pop as she clung to him desperately.

"Let go of me."

He knew better than anyone just how strong Luna was.

She could not possibly pull a grown man like him up from the edge of the cliff.

If she continued to hold onto him like this, both of them would fall over together.

"I won't." Luna clenched her teeth as she caught sight of the endless drop beyond Joshua's body. "I won't let go!"

She would not let go, never!

She could not let Joshua die, never in a million years!

Joshua curled his lips into a smile as he gazed at her face. "Luna, don't you hate me? Didn't you think I was a cold, heartless, two-faced man? If so, why do you even want to save me? If I died...wouldn't that make you happier?"

Luna clung onto Joshua's arm desperately, summoning the remaining strength in her body.

In reality, all the energy in her body had been depleted at this point. She herself did not even know how she managed to hold onto such a strong and heavy man as Joshua and prevent him from falling off.

The only thing she knew was that she could not let Joshua die.

No matter what he said, she would never let go of him.

Luna bit down on her lip and shot him a murderous glare.

"Don't think that just because you said this, I'll let go of you! Joshua Lynch, I hate you, I hate you more than anything in the world, but I can't let you die because of this.

"I'm not done hating you yet. You still haven't paid back everything you owe the children and me, so I can't let you die just like this! You have to live. I want you to live so you can pay me back for all your sins! "

Joshua's entire body stiffened when he heard this.

A split second later, he closed his eyes and let out a bitter smile, then grabbed onto Luna's hand tighter.

"Alright. I won't die. I'll live and pay you back for all the sins I've committed."

Luna bit down on her lip and nodded. She tried to pull him up with all her might, but no matter how hard she tried, she could not move an inch.

The two of them had no choice but to remain in this position while they waited for Lucas and the rest to save them.

As soon as he saw Luna sprinting over to save Joshua, Nigel had immediately perked up and ran down the mountain trail.

Luna knew that Nigel had left to find the others for help.

Therefore, the only thing she could do was hold onto Joshua and stop him from falling off the cliff before Lucas

and the rest arrived.

The only thing she could do was...wait. "Luna." Joshua lifted his head to gaze at her.

He could feel her energy depleting by the second. If they continued in this state, she would eventually give out, and the two of them would fall off the cliff together.

Judging from the great height...

It would be a miracle for anyone to survive this fall.

Therefore, only one dead body was better than two.

Joshua let out an exhale and said, "It's okay if you don't want to let go."

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"But I hope that if you can't hold on anymore, then let go of me... The children can live without their father, but they need you.

"Nigel and Nellie have already lost Neil. I can't let them lose their mother, too."

Luna bit down on her lip and stared at Joshua. She could not help but feel her chest tighten when she saw the dim look in Joshua's eyes.

She could tell that...Joshua wanted to let go of her and fall down the cliff himself.

"Don't you dare move!" Luna yelled as she furrowed her brows. "I can still hold onto you! Besides—"

She bit down on her lip and finally spilled the secret she had discovered in hopes that Joshua would keep his hope. "Neil is actually alive. Joshua, Neil is alive, and so is Theo!"

Joshua, who had been struggling to release himself from her grasp, paused when he heard this. He lifted his head to stare at her with wide eyes. "What... What are you talking about?"

"I said, they're still alive!" Luna bit down on her lip.

"Joshua, you can't die. You have to help me find Neil! You were the reason that I almost lost him in the first place, but now that he's still alive, you have to help me find him! If you don't, can you even call yourself a man?!"

Joshua remained silent for a moment upon hearing this.

Then, he curled his lips into a smile and muttered, "Neil is alive... Neil is alive, after all..."

He lifted his head to fixate his unfaltering gaze on Luna's face. "Since Neil didn't die in the explosion... Does this mean I don't owe you that much anymore, Luna?"

After all, ever since Neil's death, Joshua felt indebted to her and felt as though he could never match up to her ever again.

"Luna! Sir! " All of a sudden, footsteps and familiar cries rang out from a distance.

Lucas, along with Zach and Yuri, appeared near the cliff's edge and immediately caught sight of Luna.

Her thin frame was perched on the steep incline, her body swaying slightly in the wind, but her hand was still holding onto Joshua tightly.

The three men were astounded at this sight. None of them expected that such a tiny, scrawny woman like Luna would be able to harness so much strength!

After all, even though Joshua was slender, he was still a muscular man. Despite that, Luna was still able to hold onto him, with her tiny body pressed against the edge of the cliff.

On top of that...

Her left hand was still inflamed due to the recent fracture of her little finger.

The three men immediately lunged forward to pull Joshua up from the edge of the cliff.

Seeing that Joshua was safe and sound, Luna let out a sigh of relief, plopped onto the ground, and passed out.

As soon as he was rescued, Joshua leaned against the giant rock, catching his breath, then immediately pulled the fainted Luna into his arms.

His entire heart softened at the thought of what he had almost gone through. He pulled Luna close against his body and heaved a deep sigh.

Thank God.

Thank God he was still alive. Thank God Luna and Nigel were still alive, but most importantly, Neil... was alive as well.

Fiona, on the other hand...

Joshua turned to glance at the endless abyss below. Having fallen from such a great height, he guessed that Fiona could not have survived.

All of a sudden, the sound of a ringtone he was not familiar with blared out from among the grass.

Lucas furrowed his brows and followed the sound of the ringtone.

It was Fiona's phone, but none of them could recognize the number that was calling.

Joshua picked up the call with a frown. A familiar female voice rang out from the other end of the line, "Did Joshua and Luna manage to find you?"

This voice...

Joshua narrowed his eyes. "Aura Gibson?"

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There was nothing but silence coming from the other end of the line.

A split second later, the call ended with a slam.

Joshua's expression darkened when he heard the dial tone. He could not believe that Fiona and Aura were in contact with each other...

Although, this explained why Fiona had so many people helping her in Banyan City, despite this being her first time here.

Therefore, Dr. Robert's accident was not an accident after all. Someone had planned this.

If it was not for Aura's help, Fiona could not have made it to Yellowstone Village so quickly.

As soon as he thought of this, Joshua ordered in a low voice, "Lucas, investigate the men who are guarding Granny Lynch immediately! "

If his guesses were correct...one of Granny Lynch's bodyguards had been in on this with Fiona all along.

Lucas nodded and was about to leave with Zach and Yuri when he caught sight of Luna, who was still in Joshua's arms. "What about her?"

Joshua's energy was depleted entirely at this point, so he could not possibly carry Luna back down the mountain

like before. However, if either he or the bodyguards were to carry her, it did not seem appropriate at all.

“Don’t worry.” Joshua closed his eyes and leaned against the giant rock, still holding Luna in his arms. “My backup is coming soon.”

If it were not for the bad weather, he and Luna would not end up in this situation in the first place.

Lucas froze upon hearing this. What did Joshua mean by backup?

Who was going to be backing him up in such a desolate countryside and on top of a mountain, no less? How would they arrive?

Just as he was puzzled about this, all of a sudden, the sound of rotor blades punctured through the air.

Lucas’ entire body stiffened, and he immediately lifted his head—

“Oh my God, it’s a helicopter! “

“It is! “

Having come from a village just as desolate and secluded as this one, Zach and Yuri had never seen a helicopter before, so they could not help but gasp when they saw the helicopter flying toward them.

Lucas let out a small sigh when he saw the helicopter headed in their direction. It had been years since he last saw this helicopter.

This was the team of trained bodyguards that Joshua had been developing in private. Joshua had never allowed them to jump into action, except in life-or-death situations or emergencies.

The last time Lucas ever saw this helicopter, as well as the team of bodyguards flying it, was six years ago when Luna went missing...

Lucas let out a sigh, then turned to glance at Zach and Yuri, who were staring in awe at the helicopter above them. “Come on, let’s go. The helicopter is here to pick up Sir and Ma’am. We’ll have to hike down the mountain on foot.”

The delight on Zach and Yuri’s faces dissipated almost immediately. “Oh, okay.”

The two of them followed Lucas slowly down the muddy

mountain trail.

None of them seemed to notice that Lucas had started referring to Luna as „Ma“am“ instead of what he used to call her.

The helicopter landed on the helipad at the mountaintop. A few trained bodyguards leaped out of the helicopter and quickly made their way to Joshua“s side. Then, they picked up both him and Luna and strode back onto the helicopter. “Where to, Sir?”

Sitting in the helicopter, Joshua let out a sigh and glanced at Luna, who was still passed out in his lap due to extreme exhaustion. “Let“s go back to Banyan City. Also...tell the rest of the men to escort the remaining people in the villa back to Banyan City as well.”

“Yes, Sir! “

Luna slept for a long time, and during this time, she was stuck in a dream.

In her dream, someone was caressing her head tenderly, telling her how foolish she was.

The person held her sometimes, and at other times, laid down in her lap, looking up at her. Sometimes, they would even stroke her face gently.

Although Luna did not know who this person was, she did not feel repulsed by their actions.

After that, the dream changed.

First, she dreamt that Fiona was standing at the edge of the cliff, threatening to cut off the ropes holding Nigel up.

After that, Aura was standing in her place instead.

Finally...the person holding the knife was Neil instead.

In her dream, Neil stared at her with an evil grin she had never seen before.

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“I“m not your son. My name is Jake Landry! I“m going to kill your son! “

Then, Aura“s twisted smile appeared in front of her face.

“How does it feel to see both your sons killing each other like this, Luna? Hahahahaha—! “

“Neil, Nigel— !“

Luna jerked awake from her nightmare, so shocked that

she sat up from her bed, sweating profusely.

"Did you have a nightmare?" A low, male voice rang out from next to her.

Luna froze, then looked in the direction of the voice.

Joshua was sitting next to her bed, smiling at her with a tired expression on his face. "You've been asleep for two days now; I thought you'd be asleep for a little longer."

She stared at Joshua's face for a few seconds before finally managing to recall what had happened. Then, she let out an exhale and glanced around the room she was in. "Are we...back in Banyan City?"

Joshua nodded.

"Where are Nigel and Nellie?"

"They're back at Blue Bay Villa, getting their rest."

Joshua lowered his head and handed her a peeled banana. "They're perfectly fine, and so are you. The doctor said that you were under tremendous psychological stress and passed out due to physical overexertion. As long as you get your rest, you'll be fine."

Luna took the banana from him and pursed her lips slightly. "Then..."

"You want to ask about Fiona?"

Luna nodded as she nibbled on the banana. "Two days after she fell off the cliff, I sent some men to search for her body, but they couldn't find anything at all. Maybe her corpse was carried off into the woods by some beasts, or maybe we weren't looking in the right place. The mountainside was too big, and the manpower we had was very limited, so after searching for a few days to no avail, we gave up. Either way, according to experts, it's highly unlikely that she survived."

Joshua let out a sigh, then sat quietly as he watched Luna eat.

The look in his eyes was so tender and earnest that Luna could not help but feel uncomfortable.

This was the first time he had ever stared at Luna like this. She did not know what he was trying to do and why he was staring at her like this, but she could not help but feel a little nervous at being stared at like this.

Luna's face blushed scarlet, and she could not stop

herself from turning around and glancing at Joshua. "Can you... Can you go out? I want to have some time to myself."

Joshua's entire body stiffened upon hearing this. Then, after a moment, he exhaled and stood up. "

Alright."

He made his way to the door, then turned around and shot her a somewhat worried glance. "I will ask Bonnie and Anne to come to look after you."

With that, he strode out of the room.

Luna pursed her lips. As she watched him leave, she felt as though he looked...a little sad?

At the same time, if he continued to stare at her like this without saying a word, it would make her extremely uncomfortable, especially because she had already made up her mind about drawing clear boundaries with Joshua. A short while after he left, someone pushed open the door to Luna's ward once more.

Luna thought that Anne or Bonnie had arrived and immediately lifted her head in delight.

However, the person standing at the door was Christian, his face unshaven and bruised.

"I heard you're awake." He entered the room and smiled at Luna somewhat awkwardly. "I sneaked over to visit you."

Luna stared at the bruises on his face and asked, "Your face..."

Christian gently touched his wounds, then offered an awkward smile. "I'm fine. I was beaten up by Joshua, that's all."

Luna froze upon hearing this. "Joshua? Why did he beat you up?"

Christian heaved a sigh. "Because of you."

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Because of her?

Luna stared at Christian with wide eyes.

Christian let out a sigh and sat down in the chair next to her bed. Then, he picked up a banana from the bedside table and started eating it, sighing at the same time. "I

heard that both Dr. and Mrs. Jenson, as well as Fiona, had died, so I flew back here from abroad immediately. When I got back, the first thing I did was find you, but then I discovered that you were lying here...

"I had no idea that you passed out due to physical exertion, so when I saw you lying here on the bed, unconscious, I thought that you were in a vegetative state.

"And I..." Christian let out an awkward cough. "I cried, right in front of your bed."

Luna was so stunned by this that she could not say a single word.

Although Christian was only 19, he was still a tall, burly man. Luna could not believe that he had cried for her while she was unconscious.

"When I was crying, I said that I wanted to marry you and that if I had found evidence of Fiona's lies earlier, none of this would've happened, and I shouldn't have told you about Fiona's fake illness in the first place...

"I didn't know Joshua had been standing at the door all this while, so he heard everything. That's why I got beaten up...

"He said that if I had told him the truth earlier, even though he wouldn't believe it at first, everything wouldn't have turned out this way. He said that both of you almost died in this incident..." Christian rubbed the bruises on his face as he said this. "Joshua didn't show me any mercy at all.

"Initially, when I came back, I intended to visit you, then go back to my hometown to see my family before attending the trial of Violet's death. After all, even though I wasn't the mastermind behind her murder, I still made a mistake, and I know I can't get out of prosecution. I don't intend to hide anymore, either, but now..."

Christian took out his phone and sighed as he stared at his own mirror image through the front-facing camera.

"I can't possibly go home looking like this. If my parents find out that Joshua was the one who beat me up, they'll demand he apologize, and then...it would be chaos. I guess I'll just have to bear with this."

Luna pursed her lips and sighed, too, as she stared at Christian's wounded face. "I pity you."

She knew better than anyone that even if Christian had told Joshua the truth since the start, Joshua would not believe him anyway.

After all, he loved Fiona so much that he hung onto her every word, so how could he possibly doubt his precious Ms. Blake all because of what Christian said?

Beating up and scolding Christian for not telling the truth earlier was simply Joshua's way of saving face.

As soon as she thought of this, Luna suddenly felt stupid for feeling embarrassed when Joshua stared at her tenderly.

Even though this man had managed to save both her and Nigel on the mountaintop, this did not mean she could forgive him and go back to loving him again.

If that was the case, then why did she feel so bashful back then?

As soon as she thought of this, Luna let out an exhale and glanced at Christian. "Well, since you can't go back to your hometown anymore, stay in

Banyan City. My children and I have escaped death, so I think it's high time we celebrate this. Stay here and celebrate with us, and you can help me in the meantime, too."

Christian froze for a moment upon hearing this, then immediately nodded. "Alright! "

Luna leaned against the headboard and rested for a short while. Then, after making sure that she was alright, she called Anne and Bonnie and talked to them about hosting a small gathering at Blue Bay Villa that night, to celebrate her near-death escape.

Besides, a party would be a good way of making Nellie and Nigel feel better after what they had experienced.

After all, they still had a long battle to fight, one that concerned Aura.

After calling Anne and Bonnie, Luna called Gwen, who was still in Sea City, as well.

Gwen was so excited to hear about the party that she exclaimed, "I'll ask Luke to prepare right now!

Banyan City is only a few hours away. I'm sure I can make it for tonight !

”

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Luna initially wanted to ask Gwen not to come since this was just a small gathering, and Sea City was too far away from Banyan City.

However, when she heard how excited Gwen was over the phone, she did not want to stop her. “ Alright. If you're coming, then I'll make some of your favorite dishes.”

“Okay. I'll see you tonight! “

“Okay.”

After hanging up the phone, Luna lowered her head to glance at the time.

It was only 10 a.m.

She still had plenty of time to prepare for the party.

Luna let out an exhale and lifted her head to glance at Christian. “Come on, let's get out of here and buy some food! “

Christian followed behind her and could not help recalling the way Luna looked when he first visited her.

Just a day ago, she was lying on her bed, so motionless that he thought she was in a vegetative state, but at this moment, a day later, she was so energetic that she wanted to throw a party and celebrate with her friends... Sometimes, he could not help but wonder who was the 19-year-old: Him, or Luna?

Luna and Christian grabbed a quick bite near the hospital and then went to the supermarket to buy supplies.

They traveled from the east part of the city to the west, picking out the best food and supplies for her party. A swollen and bruised Christian tagged along behind her, decked out in a hat and face mask, carrying her shopping bags.

3 p.m.

After finally finishing the work that had piled up over the last few days, Joshua leaned back against his chair in exhaustion.

He had been so preoccupied with everything going on at home that he did not have time to finish work at all, causing his work to pile up over the last few days. In the morning, after making sure that Luna was alright, he finally had the time to come to the office and get some work done.

He had been busy for the entire day. With his work finally complete, Joshua could not help but think of Luna.

A few hours had already passed since he left the hospital. She was probably doing better, right?

Although he did not understand why Luna had asked him to leave, whether it was out of shyness or loathing, but... It had already been a few hours since he left, so she had probably gotten over it, right?

Joshua let out a sigh and took out his phone to call the hospital. "How's she doing?"

The nurse who had picked up the phone fell into silence for a moment, then asked, "Are you talking about Ms. Luna, Mr. Lynch? Didn't she contact you? She told us she'd get in touch with you.

"She left the hospital at 10 a.m. Mr. Christian Moore was the one who had signed her discharge forms."

Joshua's brows furrowed upon hearing this. Christian? What was this rascal doing with Luna?

Just as he was about to dial Christian's number, he received a call from Luke. "Joshua, we've already arrived in Banyan City. Gwen said that Luna's phone had been turned off. Maybe she ran out of battery, but either way, I wanted to ask you what time is the party starting tonight?"

"Should we go to Blue Bay Villa to wait, or should we meet up with you guys first?"

Joshua's expression darkened. "Party? What party?"

"The party to celebrate both Luna and the children's new beginning, of course. Luna invited all of her friends. What's wrong? Didn't you know about this?"

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