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William smiled as Imani bustled around the kitchen, it had been so long since he'd felt warmth. But something about the warmthy lit kitchen and his son's wife cooking made him feel like he was finally home. The only thing missing was Richard, as the thought crossed his mind he heard the sound of gravel crunch. He watched as Imani's features lit up and he knew if she was a few shades lighter her skin would have flushed with heat.

Richard entered the kitchen, he walked to Imani and pressed a kiss to her forehead, she handed him a beer. "Smells good," she was making creamy garlic prawns.

"Hopefully tastes good," she laughed, "how was work, your back later than usual?" She questioned.

He squeezed her hip and took a seat on the barstool, "good, just had a few matters to sort out. There's a need to increase security, I'm going to assign a detail to you too Imani." He already had one on William.

Imani glanced up, she could see Richard was preparing himself for a rebuttal, but something in his gaze had her nodding, "I was thinking of working from home for a while, I only have this interview with Lance. A er that I think it would be nice to have William here." Imani smiled at the older man and his pleased but surprised gaze met hers.

"Are you sure you will be able to manage work with William." Richard hated making it sound like they'd did had he knew just how much care William needed, he wouldn't risk his fathers safety again. He trusted Imani and he hated having his father in the care facility, so if his wife wanted to solve another of their problems, he was more than happy.

Imani plated the food, "I'm sure I'll be able to manage."

Richard nodded and the conversation was put to bed.

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The weeks had passed and before long Imani found herself pacing back and forth. The boardroom was lit well by floor to ceiling glass windows, a large twenty seater table sat daunting in the middle of the room. Sweat coated her palms but she forced herself to calm down, straightening her shoulders, she connected her laptop to the projector and took a seat.

It wasn't long before the room began filling, she smiled and greeted each member of the board. Late to enter was Justin Lance, he was young, had a boyish charm to him, but his eyes were sharp and she noticed the way they dissected her from head to toe. "Ms Bassette, Justin Lance," he greeted reaching a hand out to her.

She shook it, noting in her head that she'd not used Richard's last name but her own when she'd set up with an interview with the man. "Good morning, Sir, thank you for having this meeting with me." He took a seat directly opposite her and she felt sweat prickle the back of her neck.

"I go by Lance," Justin responded, he couldn't help but appreciate the woman. Sitting back in his chair he mentally chuckled, Richard the bastard he was had scored him self a beautiful, intelligent and clearly determined lady. He had noticed the way she'd not used his last name, but he made a point to show her that he new exactly who she was.

Imani stood tall, if she could handle a man as dominating and powerful as Richard, who was Justin Lance in comparison. She would not look straight through the man as she presented her ideas. She could tell she'd convinced at least half of the room, but Lance remained a mystery, he kept a composed neutral expression.

Once she was finished, the members asked questions, nothing she hadn't prepared for thankfully. A er a gruelling hour, they began leaving the room, until she was le alone with Lance. "Thank you once more," she said coolly, while packing up her equipment.

"Pleasure's all mine, Imani." This time she looked up at him, he continued, "have lunch with me!" Justin wanted to see if the woman could be tempted.

She straightened, almost purposely holding her items with her ringed hand, "sure, I'll arrange one with the other members of my team." He noticed her response was uninterested and immediately he liked the woman. She'd not declined but she'd also removed any personal connection. Smart.

He laughed, finally allowing the stone expression he'd been used to fall. "I'm sure we will be seeing more of each other, Imani. I'll have my a ce dra a contract and send it through to you." To be honest the man liked her proposal, she had got ideas and intentions. His brother was disabled a er a motor vehicle accident so he knew all too well how cruel the system could be, it was what had to start his ventures.

She cocked her head, surprised, "you don't need to discuss or think about it further?" If he was able to make the decision on the spot, who where the other members of the board.

"I have more personal reasons on this partnership, you're a smart woman and you business is something that should be utilised in every way possible." He made his way to the glass door and held it open for her.

She stepped past him, something in her soured. "I'll have to decline the offer." She knew that wicked look of complete anger simmer, she nodded. "Please send through the contract, I'll see you soon Lance." Imani pulled her arm free and continued to the elevator, not looking back.

Her mind was preoccupied in the knowledge that her husband had gone behind her back and interfered in her business. She didn't know what it bothered her so much, millions of people would kill to be in her position and be o ered deals just like that. But it felt bitter, like she hadn't achieved it herself and that small dark resentment ate at her.

Imani drove to the care facility, they'd already moved most of Williams belongs to the house. William was out in the garden, mumbling to himself when she approached. She pressed a kiss to his forehead in greeting and he smiled, "is today the day," he asked innocently.

The anger she'd felt earlier completely disappeared, "yes, today is the day I get to finally kidnap you," she laughed.

Saying their goodbyes, Imani helped William into her car before they drove home. "Can we go to the garden?" William asked. She liked how he'd begun speaking more, no longer was he silenced by pain, ghosts remained behind those ocean blue eyes but there was a sparkle of something more along with them.

"That sounds like a perfect plan, I'm thinking lemon juice and a cheese platter," she nodded.

It was a beautiful day the sun had come out to play fully, Imani took them inside where she le William in the kitchen for a quickly minute to change into a pair of shorts and t-shirt. Returning, she made up a small platter, grabbed two large glasses of lemon juice she'd prepared earlier and made her way out onto the deck.

Taking William outside, she helped the man up and onto the grass, they sat down on the blanket she'd laid out. William fell back and looked up at the sky, he felt like the cage around him was finally being rattled.

Imani followed his position and allowed the warm sun to kiss her skin while the wind whispered around them. She heard him talk about the birds and the flowers in Richard's yard, about how when he was younger he landscaped. She realised why the man liked being outside so much now, it was familiar and normal for him.

The day turned to evening quickly and Imani had to practically drag a cheeky William back into the house, she helped him into his room, it was on the ground floor. "Will you help me to the bathroom, Imani" William spoke so ly to the young woman.

She nodded, he already made the bathroom friendly for William with a shower chair and railings. Placing the brakes on, on the wheel chair she helped him to stand. He placed his weight on her and they took the three steps into the bathroom, he sat down on the shower chair and she helped removed his top and singlet. "I'm going to be right outside, call out if you need anything." She smiled.

Turning on the water, she le William. Closing the door so ly she slide her back down and sat against it, listening to the sound of the water splashing around. Her annoyance with Richard resurfaced, now that William wasn't distracting her. She didn't want to fight with the brute but she needed him to know that not telling her things was the same to her as going behind her back, even if his intentions were innocent.

"Imani," Williams voice travelled through the door and she stood up.

Grabbing the clothes she'd prepared the night before from the foot of the bed she made her way back into the bathroom. William at in the chair, a towel covering his lap. She grabbed another towel and dried his hair, helping him into his shirt she lowered and slipped him feet into his underwear and pajama bottoms, pulling them to his thighs. She turned around and he pulled them the rest of the way up, using her shoulders as support.

"What do you feel like for dinner," She questioned as they moved out of the bathroom and back into the bedroom.

William sat back into his wheel chair, feeling tired, "coconut curry?"

They made dinner together, William helped with cutting up vegetables and tasting the dish to make sure there was just the right amount of everything in there. The older man heard the garage door open before Imani did and he wheeled himself down the hall. She could hear him tell Richard about their a ernoon.

She felt rather than saw her husband enter the kitchen. The tension sat frustratingly in the room, Richard felt unease creep into him as he realised his little Imani wasn't her usual smiling warm self. Her body was closed o to him, she kept her gaze down and didn't engage in any conversation, he could tell something was stewing in that pretty little head of hers.

He knew she'd had the meeting with Lance today, he wondered if maybe the fool had rejected her proposal. "How was the meeting?" Richard finally broke the silence, Williams babbles ceased.

Imani finally looked up, her eyes cutting straight through Richard. "A walk in the park. So just how many shares do you have in Lance Corporation, sweetheart?" It was bitter sweet, her tone clinical. "Set the table for me, William, please." She requested from the older man. He more than happily wheeled himself out a er placing the plates and utensils on his lap, almost as if he knew shit was about to hit the fan.

"Fuck," Richard groaned, running a hand through his hair.

Imani grabbed him a beer and sat it down on the counter, he'd be needing it, "fuck indeed, Richard."

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(**edited**)

Thoughts?

Continue reading next part