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Sasha even cut to the chase and asked for the reason she was called here.

Frederick nodded and answered honestly, "Sasha, I've given this matter some thought. I thought I had made the right decision when I arranged for you to marry into our family years ago, but now I've come to regret it. So, if you want to, I can have that reversed immediately."

Sebastian fell silent.

"Sure," the woman, who had just walked in, replied succinctly without any hesitation.

She had not even taken a side glance at Sebastian the whole time.

Sebastian clenched his fists but could not control the veins in his temples from popping violently.

"Alright, since that's what you wish, I'll get the household register right now. Once we have your identity restored at the registration office, you and Sebastian can get your divorce certificate right after."

Frederick was about to instruct someone to retrieve their household register when Sasha spoke, "Thanks, Frederick. But I think we should keep a low profile, just in case it damages the company's reputation."

"What do you mean?"

"Sebastian and I can just settle the matter at the civil affairs office at any time. But if he's not willing to, you may still have to come with me," Sasha suggested.

Once again, the old man was touched by the thoughtfulness of this woman who would soon cease to be his daughter-in-law and was prepared to agree to her suggestion.

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Before Frederick could speak, his son beat him to it as he gritted the words through his teeth, "You're not seriously asking my father to go to the civil affairs office with you? It sounds like it's him you're divorcing!"

The atmosphere in the living room immediately turned frosty. The tension was so tangible in the air one could almost smell the explosives.

Frederick's eyes widened in intense fury; his fists balled up as he was about to teach his son some manners.

It was Sasha who maintained her composure and spoke matter-of-factly, "I don't blame you if you understood it that way since that was how we got married in the first place anyway."

"You—" Sebastian was so overcome with anger he was fumbling for more insults to hurl at the woman.

Being the president of the Hayes Corporation had not prevented Sebastian from being hit in the sore spot the second time in the same day.

The man was beside himself. "Sasha Wand! Do you have a death wish?"

This woman is not taking me seriously at all!

"I don't understand why you are so worked up, Sebastian. I thought you have always wanted my name to be taken off your household register so that you can replace it with your new partner's name. I think you should be thanking me for this."

Seeing Sebastian standing motionless, Sasha raised her voice and continued, "I don't know what is it that you're planning in your head against me, but let me be clear on one thing. Although you didn't wish to marry me in the first place, I've still given you two sons. So, if you insist on being a jack*ss about this and don't mind things getting ugly, I'll just see you in court!"

Sasha finally fixed her gaze on Sebastian.

Her glare was not only cold but also piercing sharp. Each of her words was filled with anger and hatred.

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That must be why he's refusing to sign the divorce papers now. Before this, he was more than willing to pull out all the stops to get away from me. But now, he's changed his mind because Frederick is giving me an easy way out and he's worried that Xandra's reputation will be harmed if our divorce gets publicized. How cruel and selfish can this person be!

Sasha was still glaring at Sebastian; the corner of her eyes reddened, and her body was trembling from trying to suppress the numbing pain in her body. There was a hint of regret on top of resentment in her emotional eyes.

Sebastian was momentarily dumbstruck.

Am I seeing regret in her eyes? What's she regretting? Marrying me, or having met me in the beginning?

The intense hatred in Sasha's eyes had struck him hard. As the man's thin lips pursed together into a line, he wondered why he felt panicky and lost at the same time. These unfamiliar feelings scared him because, for the first time, Sebastian was losing control of his usual composure.

"Sasha Wand, have you gone crazy? I've never said that I didn't want to be divorced from you, so stop barking like a mad dog! Wait here, and I'll get somebody to prepare the divorce documents right now!" With great self-restraint, Sebastian hurled the most hurtful words he could think of at her and grabbed his car key before he stormed out of the living room.

Sasha stood still as she watched the fast-moving figure disappear from the corner of her eyes. Suddenly, she felt like the last ounce of energy had left her body as she slumped into the chair behind her.

"Sasha, are you okay?" Frederick was silent the whole time the couple exchanged curses. Her abrupt fall into the chair startled him.

Sasha opened her mouth in an attempt to say something, only to realize that she was too exhausted to utter another word.

Fatigue had overcome her.

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It was as though she was finally freed from the shackles of her past. The feeling of being liberated was so overwhelming that her whole body was trembling.

I'm finally free.

She would no longer allow herself to harbor the faint hope of reuniting with Sebastian and find excuses for him every time he hurt her, telling herself that he did those things for a good reason.

Who am I kidding? I was my own prisoner, but I no longer am. I'm going to have a new life after this.

While Sasha sat on that chair, tears started to roll down her cheeks. Clutching her chest, she wanted to cry her heart out. But as she took a deep breath, she realized that her aching heart did not allow her to do so.

She felt as though her heart had been pierced through with a dagger.

...

Sasha remained at the Hayes residence the whole afternoon.

Since Sebastian had indicated that he would have the divorce papers sent over, she wanted to be there when the documents arrived.

But hours had passed, and there was still no sign of Sebastian.

After a while, Sasha grew drowsy from getting too worked up earlier on and fell asleep in the house.

When Matteo and Ian came over for their mother, they saw a sleeping Sasha. They then scuttled to their grandfather. "Grandpa, is Mommy sleeping?"

Frederick was looking intently at a booklet in his hand when a child's voice broke his daze. He quickly put down the booklet and replied, "Yeah, she's asleep. What are you guys doing here? I thought you were spending time with your uncle?"

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"We did. But we've got to go back now," said Matteo smilingly after checking the time on his smartwatch.

It's about time to pick Vivian up from her preschool, or the crybaby will surely kick up a fuss if we're late.

After hearing that Matteo intended to go home, a hint of hesitation crept up the old man's face as he looked at his grandson and asked tentatively, "Well, I was thinking... maybe you could sleep here tonight and spend some time with me?"

"Huh?"

Frederick's unexpected suggestion startled the boys.

Ian did not resist that idea as he had spent a lot of time here growing up. Matteo, on the other hand, was instantly filled with reluctance.

He was not used to sleeping in a strange place without his parents.

"But Mommy said that we need to go back home so that we won't be late for our preschool tomorrow. Grandpa, why don't we come back to visit you on the weekend?" Matteo had cleverly turned his rejection into a visit in his sweetest voice possible.

However, Matteo's suggestion only made the old man's heart grow heavier.

Unbeknownst to the boys, the booklet their grandfather was holding onto was the Hayes family's household register. Frederick was just thinking about the custody of Matteo as they barged into his room.

Matteo is a Hayes, so it is without question that he will have to return to the Hayes family.

Moments before Matteo walked in, Frederick had tried to put himself in Sasha's shoes while considering who should get custody of the child.

After all, the Hayes family owed her that much.

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Nevertheless, the moment he saw the boys walk in together, he was reminded of what a sweet and cheerful little person Matteo was compared to his frail twin brother. The old man now had second thoughts about letting him go.

“Oh, that won’t be a problem. I can take you guys to school, and I promise that I won’t be late. What do you think?” Frederick was insistent.

“Huh?”

“Alright, let’s get the butler to show you to your room. I’ve re-decorated the room, and I think you’ll like it.”

Without waiting for a reply, Frederick beckoned his butler over and instructed him to bring the boys to their room.

Ian’s face darkened in an instant before he shouted, “I’m not going!”

“You—” Frederick was once again stumped by his elder grandson.

Sensing the rising tension in the room, Matteo was quick to defuse the situation. “Don’t be upset, Grandpa. It takes time with Ian. Let me talk to him.”

With that, Matteo pulled his brother out of the room before Frederick could stop them.

After they reached a deserted courtyard a few minutes later, Matteo asked his brother, “Ian, you did that on purpose just now, didn’t you?”

“Hmm,” Ian admitted while lowering his head in embarrassment, the back of his ears turning pink.

With a big grin on his face, Matteo patted his brother’s shoulder to indicate a job well done.

He then attempted to analyze the situation. “Something must have happened between Daddy and Mommy. Otherwise, Grandpa wouldn’t be acting this way.”

“Hmm.” Ian frowned in agreement.

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"We can't both stay here. We've got to find out what's going on between the two of them. Didn't you see what Grandpa was trying to do just now? He was trying to keep me here. Me!"

Ian was rendered speechless by his brother's reasoning.

Matteo's voice turned solemn when he continued, "If Grandpa is really planning to fight with Mommy over me, things will definitely turn ugly. He's way more powerful than Daddy, and there's not much we can do to help Mommy in this matter."

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Ian was still lost for words, but the Transformers figurine in his hand was clutched more firmly as he listened to his brother's analysis.

No, they can't do this to Mommy. It's our mommy, and no one can hurt her!

For the first time, the boys balled up their fists together, their eyes staring out with unswerving determination.

...

Sasha was awakened by the kids.

"Mommy, wake up. We need to get Vivian. It's almost 4 o'clock."

"What?" Sasha sat up straight from the futon, well alert in an instant. "It's almost 4 o'clock? Alright, let's go get your sister now," she said while hurriedly getting ready to leave.

Matteo quickly brought over Sasha's scarf and handbag as she was putting on her shoes.

When Sasha was all set, Matteo naturally slid his little hand into his mother's palm.

Enveloping her son's hand in her own, Sasha's eyes searched one round for Ian but to no avail. "Where's Ian?"

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"Ian is staying here. Daddy will come to fetch him tonight," Matteo explained delightfully.

Is that so...

Sasha did not say more. After all, the boys had been living separately since their births; one with her while the other with their father.

Sasha and Matteo had just stepped outside the guest room when they bumped into Frederick, who was holding onto his walking cane.

"Sasha, I suppose you're heading back now. There's something I've been meaning to give you."

Sasha and Matteo stopped in their tracks as the old man walked toward them.

Despite what Sebastian had done to her, Sasha still felt grateful toward Frederick, especially for helping her today. He had chosen to protect her and set her free rather than siding with his own son.

"Frederick, it's cold out here. You should've just gotten one of the housemaids to pass on your message to me," Sasha said politely.

"This is too important for them to handle. Here, I want you to have this," the old man said while handing her a red booklet.

Sasha looked down at the booklet and was startled when she saw the words "household register" on the cover. "Frederick, this is—"

"I'm really sorry that you've wasted the whole afternoon. I've checked with the office. Apparently, someone important showed up, and Sebastian had to meet with them. As such, I've decided to give you this. Once your identity is restored, you can apply for a divorce with this," Frederick said apologetically while still holding out the booklet.

Sasha was still in shock.

No way... Did I hear him right? is he seriously giving me their household register?

Staring at the booklet with her gaping mouth, Sasha was still in disbelief.

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Seeing as the woman was stunned, Frederick stuffed the booklet into Matteo's hand while reminding him, "Keep this for your mommy. This is very important, so you have to take good care of it, okay?"

"I understand, Grandpa." Matteo took over the booklet happily. He then carefully slid it into his pocket.

So Mommy and Daddy are getting a divorce! Oh, just as well. Problem solved!

With that thought, Matteo left happily with Sasha.

That night, as Sasha was giving Vivian a bath, Matteo called Ian, who was now back at Frontier Bay.

"Ian, I know what's going on with Mommy and Daddy."

"What is it?"

"It turns out they're getting divorced!" Matteo exclaimed in exasperation.

He was disgruntled at their fruitless effort in carrying out all the plans in hopes that their parents would reconcile.

Now that their parents were getting a divorce, a complete family seemed like a farther dream to them.

Ian's face darkened on the other end of the line. "Is it Daddy's fault again?"

"I'm not sure. But more importantly, I need to ask you this. Do you want them to be separated?" Matteo asked over the phone.

Ian was taken aback by his twin brother's unexpected question.

What does Matteo think about this then? He must be thinking that Mommy and Daddy should separate, or he wouldn't have asked me such a question.

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Standing inside his bedroom, tears welled up in Ian's eyes the next instant, and the blood drained from his already pale face. Without any warning, he cast his smartwatch aside and dashed into the cupboard.

"Ian? Ian?" Matteo called out in panic.

There was no response from Ian, and Matteo grew anxious as he could hear loud thuds from the phone.

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Ian! Matteo was in complete shock. Immediately, he rushed into the bathroom, where Sasha was giving Vivian a bath.

"Mommy! Mommy! Something's happened over at Ian's. Can you please check on him?"

"What?" Sasha sprung to her feet. "What happened to Ian?"

"I-I don't know. We were on the phone just then, but he went quiet all of a sudden, and then there were loud noises... Mommy, I'm so sorry."

Matteo's eyes reddened as he was in full-blown panic mode.

Sasha comforted him by saying, "Don't worry, it's not your fault. Maybe something else was going on over there. I will go over right now, and you're gonna stay home to look after Vivi, okay?"

After taking Vivian out of the shower and dressing her up, Sasha hurried out the door.

What's happening to Little Ian? He still seemed fine at Frederick's today. How can he be in trouble so soon after?

In her frantic moments, Sasha had entertained the brief idea of calling Sebastian to ask him, but the thought of what had occurred at Frederick's earlier that day stopped her promptly.

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I'd better not alert him to this. Since we're getting divorced, what if he decides to stop me from seeing Ian?

Sasha put down her phone, but her mind was still unsettled. Luckily, it was an off-peak hour, so traffic was considerably smooth. She arrived at Frontier Bay after about half an hour.

"Ms. Wand? What are you doing here so late?" The security guard at Royal Court One recognized Sasha but was still surprised to see her visiting late at night.

Sasha, on the other hand, was so flustered she had no time to explain to him. "I'm here for Ian. What's happened to him?"

The guard was puzzled by the woman's question. "Ian? He's fine. What's the matter?"

Ignoring his bewilderment, Sasha pushed open the heavy gate and walked straight in.

A few minutes later, Sasha arrived at the villa. However, once she stepped into the living room, she was met with dead silence.

The cold winter night coupled with the absolute silence made the villa seem haunted.

Why is it so quiet around here? I thought something has happened to Ian?

While Sasha stood in the living room in a daze, a voice came from behind her. "Ms. Wand? When did you get here? You should have let me know that you were coming."

The voice belonged to Wendy. She thought she heard something and came out of the kitchen to check.

There was finally someone Sasha could talk to in the villa. "Wendy, where's little Ian? Is he okay?"

"Ian? He's fine. I sent him off to bed after giving him a bath just now." Like the security guard, Wendy also seemed confused about Sasha's late visit tonight.

Saying no more, Sasha stole a quick glance at the second floor and started striding toward Ian's room.

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Matt will never lie to me. Since he said that something has happened to Ian, then something must be wrong. The housemaids and guard may not have noticed it yet.

In no time, Sasha arrived outside Ian's bedroom.

"Little Ian?" she called out her son's name while trying to push open the door.

Her heart sank when she realized the door was locked from the inside.

What's going on with this kid? Why is he doing this again all of a sudden?

Wendy, who had followed closely behind Sasha, saw what happened and hurried downstairs to retrieve the bedroom key.

This was no joking matter. Everyone in Royal Court One knew that Ian was not allowed to lock his bedroom door. Given his fragile body and unpredictable emotional state, there was no telling what would happen if he locked his bedroom door.

Therefore, Sebastian had declared that his son's bedroom door was not allowed to be locked from the inside.

And all this while, Ian had been obeying his father in this regard.

But now, he had locked it again.

Wendy rushed back with the key in her hand. "Ms. Wand, here you go. The key."

Sasha grabbed the key and swiftly opened the bedroom door.

"Little Ian, what—"

Sasha's jaw dropped as soon as she dashed inside the room. When she was told that something had happened to Ian, she thought that maybe he had fallen ill again.

But when she was inside Ian's room, she was taken by surprise; the room was a complete mess!

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What's going on here? What happened to my little Ian?

Sasha's face turned pale as she surveyed the room; there were over-turned furniture, broken toys, and smashed items on the floor. Panic-stricken, she started searching for her son in the room.

"Little Ian? Little Ian, where are you?"

"Ian? Ian, please tell us where you are," Wendy called out while checking every corner of the room.

The two adults looked as though they were living their worst nightmare. They had searched every spot in the room, but there was no sign of Ian.

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It's like the kid had vanished into thin air!

"How did this happen? Where did he go?"

Panic-stricken, Wendy was about to summon the security guards to search for the kid.

Sasha was no better off. However, she didn't believe that her child would run away from home. He is only five and will definitely leave some clues behind even if he runs away.

Sasha suppressed the fear in her heart and continued searching the room.

In the end, what got her to breathe a sigh of relief was hearing the soft breathing that came from the huge closet.

"Little Ian!"

Sasha opened the closet immediately.

As suspected, a small, curled-up figure appeared before the two adults. The pale-faced boy with pallid lips was only half-conscious at that moment.

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"Little Ian..."

...

Sebastian was in a club when he received the call from home.

After he got home that afternoon, Leslie showed up and informed Sebastian that the club Hayes Corporation invested in had opened its doors. He was then invited to go check things out as well as relax in the new club.

That was why he went over.

The cocktail had just been served, and it hadn't even rolled down Sebastian's throat when his phone rang.

"Sebastian Hayes, what the hell are you doing? Why aren't you home at this hour? Don't you know that something terrible happened?"

The sudden angry howl was like dynamite blowing off right beside his ear, which stunned the man and forced him to move his phone away.

"What's wrong? Who is it?" asked Leslie, who was sitting at the side.

He was curious. This is Sebastian Hayes! Who on Earth is crazy enough to yell at him as soon as the call is picked up?

Life, however, always had a way of surprising a person. Sebastian merely paused for a moment after being reprimanded that badly.

After that, he placed his phone by his ear again and complained, "Sasha Wand, have you gone nuts? How dare you butt into my business?"

"Are you insane? Who the hell cares about you? I'm only calling to ask you to come back because something happened to your son. He has to go to the hospital immediately. As his father, aren't you being a little too irresponsible?"

What followed next was another series of furious howls.

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Sebastian was rendered speechless.

Leslie blurted, "Holy moly, who is that fearless woman? I have got to meet her."

Those words made Sebastian's expression turn even uglier.

Surprisingly, he wasn't actually angry. On the contrary, receiving that call and being yelled at made Sebastian feel pretty good.

I wonder if that is how other wives react. Will they call their husbands up and reprimand them like this whenever the men went home late?

Sebastian put his drink aside.

"Got it."

Without saying another word, Sasha hung up the call immediately.

That got Leslie utterly stupefied.

I swear, I need to ask this gutsy woman where she found the courage to go up against this tyrant.

And the dude doesn't even seem angry!

When Leslie walked over and saw that Sebastian was leaving, he asked, "What's wrong? Did something happen?"

This man is acting out of the norm today. Besides staying here for the entire afternoon, he also looks unusually grim. Even though Sebastian never said a word, Leslie, who had known him for over a decade, could still tell that something was amiss.

The problem was that he had no idea what was troubling Sebastian.

"It's fine. Ian's just sick."

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“Huh?” blurted Leslie, who was genuinely worried upon hearing that. “Are you sure that everything is alright? Do you need me to go with you?”

Leslie knew that Ian had always been in poor health. Hence, hearing about the news got him worried, and he truly wanted to pay a visit.

Unfortunately, the man standing in front of him outright rejected his kind gesture.

“There’s no need for that. Just make sure that business is running smoothly here.”

Leslie was dumbfounded.

“By the way, Sabrina said that she would be dropping by today. Remember to go welcome her later,” reminded Sebastian before grabbing his car keys and leaving.

Leslie felt like he was just struck by lightning.

Sabrina? D*mn it, there goes my good days.

At the People’s Hospital located in the city center.

Sasha worked in that hospital, so everyone recognized her when she rushed over with her son in her arms.

“Nancy, the boy...”

“He’s my son,” replied Sasha without hesitation.

She has a son?

The doctors on-site hurried over upon hearing that. What truly surprised them, however, was that the boy looked similar to a certain someone...

“What is everyone standing around for? Examine the boy now!”

The head physician scolded the other medical staff when he saw everyone gathering around. With that, everyone dispersed and got to work immediately.

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On the other hand, Sasha remained composed while standing at the side.

The kid had always been in poor health, and he practically grew up in the hospital. Hence, it was only natural that the medical staff knew about his condition.

A few minutes later, the ER doctor finally finished examining the boy.

“How is he, Dr. Woods? Is he going to be alright?”

“He’s fine. His condition was likely caused by emotional distress. Did something upset him greatly?” asked the doctor.

Upset him?

However, Sasha was clueless about what happened to the kid too.

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That being said, Sasha was aware of how easily Ian’s physical health got affected by emotional turmoil. That was why she didn’t use her acupuncture techniques on him and took him to the hospital instead. From her experience, the most suitable treatment for him in such circumstances would be sedatives.

And he’ll also need psychotherapy.

As Sasha stared at the boy on the bed whose eyes remained shut, she felt guilt-stricken.

“I don’t know. He was already hiding in the closet when I arrived, all curled up like a ball. It’s likely that something horrified him.” Sasha speculated.

She was at a loss as she honestly had no idea what had happened to her son, and the kid refused to talk even after he woke up. He simply kept his eyes closed without moving a muscle.

That got Sasha extremely worried.

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Dr. Woods nodded and agreed, "Yes, that is most likely what happened. Let him rest for a while. We'll ask him about it after he wakes up. Maybe he'll open up then."

"Okay."

Sasha breathed a sigh of relief after hearing that. After getting the prescription from the doctor, she went to pay the bill and retrieve the medicine.

Sebastian made it to the hospital before Sasha returned from the pharmacy. Upon entering the room, he saw a tiny figure lying on the bed.

"Ian?"

Sebastian was much calmer when dealing with his son's illness. After all, he had brought the child to the hospital countless times.

Despite that, watching the tiny figure under those white sheets still gripped Sebastian's heart.

He walked over to check how his boy was doing.

Unfortunately, the moment he approached the bed, he saw the tiny thing inching away under the sheets. Ian still had his eyes closed, so he didn't catch a glimpse of Sebastian but only detected his scent.

Yet, that was enough to make the kid keep his guard up, refusing to get close to his dad.

Sebastian was at a loss for words upon seeing that.

"Here's the medicine, miss. Please administer it to my son," said Sasha who had just returned at that moment before handing the medicine for the boy to the nurse.

Hearing that from the side of the hospital bed, Sebastian retracted his long fingers that were clutching onto the edge of the sheets.

When Sasha walked over with the nurse, she realized that Sebastian was there too and abruptly paused in her tracks, almost causing the nurse to crash into her.

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“Dr. Nancy?”

“Sorry, let’s go over there.”

Sasha quickly averted her gaze and followed the nurse to her son’s bedside with a needle.

At first, Sebastian had some doubts, but when he saw that the lady seemed professional, he swallowed his words, and with his hands in his pockets, he strode to the seat beside the window.

He seems so freaking relaxed.

Sasha checked the kid’s temperature after attaching a saline bag to him. She later glared at the man icily and informed, “I’ll leave the rest to you.”

Sebastian was swiping on his phone with his legs crossed at that moment. He appeared relaxed and nonchalant, exuding the aura of a powerful man. Hearing Sasha say that she would leave the matter to him simply made him look up with an indifferent expression.

“Before you leave, shouldn’t you tell me what happened?”

The hell? He’s only asking about this right now? Was his fatherly love just an act this entire time?

Sasha’s beautiful face turned hostile instantly as she growled, “You’re asking me? How would I know? He was already hiding in the closet when I reached the villa. He was all alone like... like an abandoned pet! If you were home, you could’ve prevented that from happening!”

Sasha’s eyes reddened as she spoke.

Upon recalling how pitiful the child looked inside the closet, tears welled up in her eyes. Every time she thought about his crouching figure, her heart would wrench in pain.

Sebastian was stunned as he didn’t expect her to become so emotional all of a sudden.

She’s even crying...

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Sebastian stiffly retracted his gaze. For the first time, he didn't reprimand her for losing her temper with him.

"It's been a while since he last acted this way. When he was younger, he stayed in the Hayes residence for some time. That was when he became reclusive and resisted social interactions. After I brought him to my place, he stopped having meltdowns like this."

Sasha was speechless.

Her bloodshot eyes were still wet with tears when she stared blankly at the man in front of her.

What is that supposed to mean? Is he trying to say that Little Ian is autistic? If that is the case, then everything makes sense since it's normal for autistic kids to lack a sense of security. In fact, that is precisely the cause of the disorder. As his mother, it is my fault for not giving him the sense of security he needs!

Sasha recalled how the boy always looked sorrowful and reluctant whenever he heard her saying that she was leaving. Now she finally understood the reason behind it.

Her heart ached the second she made sense of everything, and she could no longer stop her tears from rolling down her cheeks.

Sebastian was speechless.

What is wrong with her? She's crying regardless of whether I speak up!

"Then I won't go back tonight. I'll stay and take care of him."

Sebastian was utterly baffled.

"Oh, Matt and Vivi are still in the apartment. Get someone to take care of them after you go back. Wendy will do. It's not safe for two kids to be alone at home."

Sasha then took out a set of keys from her purse.

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The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 167

Sebastian was stunned once again.

He did not expect any of that to happen. When he shared that story, he was just trying to let Sasha know why Ian was sick.

Why are things spiraling this way?

No one knew what was on his mind as he sat there quietly with his dark brown eyes fixated on those keys.

That gaze...

Sasha thought that Sebastian was going to reject her request, so she turned grouchy and demanded, "Why aren't you leaving? Have you forgotten that Matt is your son too?"

Upon hearing that, the man raised his brows.

He then got up from the chair and grabbed the keys on the way out.

What the hell is wrong with him?

...

That night, Sasha stayed in the hospital with her eldest son.

Meanwhile, Sebastian left with the keys to the apartment. Sasha thought that he would do as she instructed and get someone else to take care of the kids in the apartment after he returned home.

She didn't realize that the man went to her place immediately after he left the hospital.

Mommy?

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Matteo was in his room when Sebastian reached the apartment. The kid had not been able to sleep because he was worried about Ian. Abruptly, he heard the door being opened.

His tiny head popped out from under the sheets instantly.

“Ian...”

Vivian, on the other hand, was snoring lightly like a cute piglet. Sensing her brother moving about, she got upset that the cold air had invaded her warm blanket and grumbled in her adorable voice.

Her chubby arms hugged her brother even tighter.

He was about to pry his baby sister’s arm away when he heard a series of heavy footsteps and the sound of something being tossed onto the table.

He could tell that the person was heading directly to their bedroom.

“Mom... Daddy? What brought you here?”

When the little boy saw the tall figure standing by the door, he was so surprised that his big, round eyes bulged.

Sebastian was a little surprised as well.

It was likely that he didn’t expect the little one to be awake at that hour.

“Were you waiting for your mommy?”

Sebastian walked to the kids’ bed and sat beside them. Stroking the boy’s head, he gestured for him to lie back down so that he won’t catch a cold.

Matteo lay back down obediently.

Still, he was happy to see his daddy there. His eyes shone as brightly as the stars in the sky.

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“By the way, Mommy went to check on Ian. Daddy, is Ian alright? Is he sick? Also, why are you here? D-did you come just to see us?” asked Matteo, who was especially careful when he said the last sentence.

Unlike Ian, Matteo wasn't raised by Sebastian, so their interaction was a little stiff, and they couldn't chat freely like how Ian did with Sebastian.

Being the intelligent person he was, Sebastian could guess what the kid was thinking.

He sat down by the bedside and tucked Matteo in. “Ian got a fright,” answered Sebastian. “Your mommy is staying in the hospital, so I came to see how you guys are doing.”

“Really?”

As suspected, the little one was ecstatic to hear that answer.

Daddy really came over for us!

As his father gazed at him lovingly, Matteo's cute face lit up with a bright smile. The boy then asked, “Is Ian's illness serious, though? I was talking to him over the phone at that time, but he suddenly stopped talking.”

“You were talking to him?” blurted Sebastian in mild astonishment. “What were the two of you talking about?”

“We... uh...”

Instantly, the little guy lying on the bed was lost for words.

He couldn't exactly tell his father that he and his brother were talking about their parents' divorce. Daddy will definitely be angry if he learns the truth. He will think that we're bad kids for eavesdropping.

“I-It's nothing. We were just talking about the games we play.”

“I see. Ian's fine, and he will be in good shape again by tomorrow. It's late, so be good and go to bed.”

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Sebastian didn't press on after hearing that reply. He simply stroked the little guy's head before telling him to go to bed.

Matteo grinned at his daddy and said, "Okay, but where will you sleep tonight, Daddy? Are you going to sleep here with us? We don't have that many rooms here, and the only other room is Mommy's."

This kiddo is teasing his daddy...

Sebastian pinched Matteo's button nose before exiting the nursery.

It was not possible for Sebastian to sleep in their nursery because there was only a kid's bed. There was definitely not enough space for an adult, especially with two kids already sleeping there.

Sebastian ended up going to Sasha's bedroom. When he opened the door, he saw a small but clean room.

Given Sasha's financial capabilities, it was normal that she couldn't afford a luxurious place.

That being said, she kept her room clean, regardless of where she stayed. Even the shabby house in Old Town seemed welcoming after she decorated it.

When Sebastian entered the room, he noted that the room was illuminated by warm lighting with a tidy bed in the middle of it. On the bed was a neatly folded light blue blanket. The room was simple but not lacking. There weren't many decorative items next to the bed, which suited Sasha's style because she had always been a minimalist. Besides a bedside table with a thick medical book on it, there was only a nightstand.

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Despite that, Sebastian didn't feel like there was anything lacking in the room as he saw a purple vase on the study table placed some distance away. Some fresh chrysanthemum flowers were blooming in the vase.

The stunning flowers were like a ray of sunshine in winter, and they lit up the entire room.

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This woman has pretty good taste.

Sebastian took his coat off.

At first, Sebastian planned on spending the night sitting in front of the study table. He regarded himself as a dignified man who was too high and mighty to touch the foul bed that the woman had slept in.

The annoying reality of it was that for some unknown reason, he lay down on it before he even realized it.

To make matters worse, he caught himself wrapped up tightly in that blanket when he woke up the next morning, and he could smell the fragrant scent of that woman wafting from it!

I must've been possessed last night!

Overwhelmed by conflicting emotions, he was about to throw the blanket aside and get up when a tiny figure dashed into the room.

"Morning, Daddy. How did you sleep last night?"

It was Matteo.

Sebastian felt even more troubled at his son's sudden appearance. He quickly whipped his head around and acted like he had been looking in another direction the entire time.

"Good morning. Are both of you up?"

"Yeah, we have to reach the preschool by eight-thirty. Daddy, will you drop Vivi and me off at preschool today?" asked Matteo.

His tiny face was filled with anticipation when he made that request.

Preschool?

Sebastian finally turned around to take a glance at his son. All the man saw was the eagerness and hope in the boy's eyes, which prompted Sebastian to nod without hesitating. "Sure. Is everyone ready?"

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“Not yet. Vivi hasn’t combed her hair yet. Daddy, do you know how to do it?”

Sebastian was taken aback by Matteo’s sudden question as he had no idea how to do something like that.

He had experience in taking care of kids, but since Ian was a boy, there was never a need for Sebastian to tie his hair.

Unfortunately, there were no other adults in the house, so Vivian, who was already in her uniform, had to follow her brother to Sasha’s room. She couldn’t help but feel a little scared.

At first, Vivian didn’t actually believe it when Matteo said that their daddy came to their apartment.

Why would Daddy come to our small apartment? Besides, he is not on good terms with Mommy, and they’re constantly arguing. So why would he come here when he despises her?

Vivian remained skeptical until she actually saw that tall figure in the room.

“Come here, little girl.”

Sebastian looked down at the frightened little girl, who was hiding behind her brother. It was early in the morning, so Sebastian’s patience hadn’t waned yet. He waved his hand to beckon her over.

Only then did the little girl finally approach him.

Unlike his sons, the little girl had plumper cheeks and looked cute as she walked to Sebastian in a daze. She had been standing in front of him for some time with her head tilted up, staring at him with her big, round eyes.

Why is she staring at me like that? Is she showing off her large eyes?

Sebastian reached for the back of her collar and picked her up like she was in a bag. After that, he put her on a stool.

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“Gah! You can’t pick me up like that. I am a kid! You’re supposed to carry me,” the little girl finally spoke up. She glared at her daddy after being placed on the stool, and her tiny arms waved in the air when she complained in her cute voice.

Sebastian was stunned.

It was as if he was by the riverbank, and a gust of comforting wind had just swept past him. His heart was filled with a sweet feeling as he looked at her tiny face and listened to her baby voice that was completely different from that of his sons.

With that, Sebastian’s heart softened.

“Okay, I won’t do that again.”

Vivian didn’t utter another word.

Her big, round eyes gleamed as she sat obediently on the stool so that her daddy could tie her hair up for her.

However, she acted up again when he tied her hair.

“Do you actually know how to tie my hair? It hurts when you do that!” complained Vivian angrily as she touched her head of hair that was disheveled. There was no saying how upset she was at that moment.

How is he going to be my daddy if he can’t even tie my hair properly?

Sebastian was a little stumped.

He honestly tried his best, but tying pigtails for the little girl turned out to be more complicated and nerve-racking than signing contracts worth billions!

Whose sh*tty idea is this? Why must girls tie their hair up?

Sebastian was tempted to toss the comb into the trash can.

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However, he suppressed that desire, and after putting in his all, he managed to help the little girl tie a simple ponytail. Matteo, who had been watching from the side, could not help cringing.

Nevermind. We should let him off the hook this time. After all, he's never helped comb his daughter's hair before.

Surprisingly, Vivian was pretty happy about it.

Her tiny, plump hand caressed the ponytail that her daddy had tied for her. It was like she had just received the most precious gift in the world, and she hopped out of the house happily, leaving the other two dumbfounded.

What the...

...

At the hospital.

Sasha had woken up by then, and she was getting ready to take Ian home.

"Let's go home, Little Ian. The doctor said that you're fine now, so you've been discharged," cooed Sasha as she gazed at the boy who had been sleeping in her arms all night.

Unfortunately, the boy, who was recovering well, closed his eyes as soon as he heard about going home.

He even wanted to turn around and ignore her completely.

Sasha was at a loss.

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"I was talking about going back to the apartment where your siblings are staying, not the one in Frontier Bay. Do you want to go over there, Little Ian?"

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Seeing that the kid refused to talk to her, Sasha deliberately whispered those words into his ears.

As expected, the rascal's long eyelashes flickered upon hearing that while he was in his mommy's arms. His eyes remained closed, though.

Sasha couldn't help finding that hilarious.

Soon after, she took him out of the hospital and brought him to her place. Fortunately, Ian no longer showed any sign of resistance.

Deep down, Sasha was filled with guilt. She had no idea that she played such a huge role in the child's mental wellbeing. Back then, she saw how sad he was every time she left the house, but she had always assumed that he was simply a little reluctant to see her leave.

I never realized that I affected him that much.

Sasha decided then and there that she would deal with her son's issues before getting a divorce.

When Sasha took Ian back to the apartment, she assumed that her other kids would be home as well since she didn't return the night before. But she was surprised to find it empty when she opened the door.

Huh? Where are the kids?

Panic-stricken, she immediately fished out her phone and called Wendy. "Hello, Wendy? Did you take the kids somewhere?"

Wendy paused for a moment before replying, "No, Ms. Wand. I didn't babysit your kids."

Panic instantly rose in her heart. Without another word, she hung up the call and rushed to the rooms.

She noticed that the nursery looked normal, but the same could not be said for her own room as her bed was messy. It looked like someone had slept on it, and there were even two balls of crumpled-up tissue paper on the floor.

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"It's Daddy!"

"What did you say?"

Standing by the door, Sasha was stunned to her core upon hearing that. Her eyes bulged as she shifted her gaze to her son, who had followed her to the room.

Ian pointed at the nightstand and said, "His watch..."

A look of surprise crept up Sasha's face.

...

At Hayes Corporation.

Sebastian had forgotten to put on his watch that morning.

The moment he woke up that morning, his son got him to tie Vivian's hair, and the rest of the morning was just one hectic event after the other, so there was no way he would have remembered to wear his watch.

Luke noticed it as well.

That's strange. Where is his watch?

After entering the room with a bunch of folders, he placed them on the desk before checking his own watch and asking, "Mr. Hayes, are we going to the airport later?"

"Why would we do that?"

Luke didn't expect the man, who was busying away at the desk, to look up and ask that question in a confused tone.

That got Luke to choke a little on his words.

Really? Has he forgotten what he said yesterday as well? That he wanted to go on a business trip today? I had to rush to get those air tickets!

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Luke felt like it was necessary for him to remind the man. "Mr. Hayes, you mentioned yesterday that you wanted to go to Moranta, remember? You even told me to buy air tickets for a flight at eleven o'clock."

The boss did not say another word after hearing that.

However, the man didn't move from his seat either. He simply stiffened a little before turning to the folders that Luke had brought over and reading them half-heartedly.

"I'm not going anymore."

"Huh?" blurted Luke in a stunned voice. "You're not going anymore?"

"Well, yeah. That annoying Ms. Sabrina is back. Go reserve a private room for tonight. We'll throw her a welcoming party," instructed Sebastian calmly.

Luke was baffled.

Is that really necessary?

Since when did these two siblings get so close? Doesn't he usually ignore his big sister whenever she returns?

Sometimes, Ms. Sabrina would drop by the office to pay her brother a ridiculously short visit, but that's all. When has he ever thrown a welcoming party for his sister?

Luke found it strange.

However, his boss had already given out the orders, so Luke had no choice but to obey.

"Should I inform Mr. Ian about it?"

"Isn't that obvious?"

"And what about Ms. Wand? Should I invite her?" asked Luke cautiously.

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Luke's intentions were simple. It was a family gathering, and since Ian was going, it was only natural for Matteo, who was also Sebastian's son, to attend the party as well. After all, Matteo had never met his aunt before, so it was the perfect opportunity to introduce them to one another.

To Luke's surprise, Sebastian rejected that suggestion without giving it a thought.

"There's no need for that. Just pick Ian up from Frontier Bay."

"Understood."

Not daring to say anything else, Luke simply turned around and left to deal with the matter.

Sabrina Hayes... It's probably better if the boy never meets her.

Sabrina was even more notorious than her brother Sebastian. Almost all the other members of the Hayes family kept their distance from her due to her eccentric behavior.

That was especially true for Sasha all those years ago.

Naturally, Sasha didn't know that Sabrina had returned. The former didn't clock in that day and stayed at home to care for her eldest son instead.

The two of them ate some home-cooked delicacies, and when afternoon rolled by, they went to the mall where Sasha bought him a new blanket and some pajamas that matched his siblings' nightwear.

After that, the two of them went to the preschool to pick up Matteo and Vivian.

The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 170

"Little Ian, you will be sharing a room with Matt from now on, okay? Vivi and Mommy will stay in the other room."

"Okay."

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The little rascal had completely recovered and was sitting in the backseat as he hugged his brand new pajamas. His cool features could not contain his excitement and contentment at that moment.

His wish had always been that simple, and it was finally going to be fulfilled.

When Sasha caught his smile through the rearview mirror, she couldn't help feeling ecstatic as well.

They soon reached the preschool and picked up the two other rascals., who were delighted when they got into the car and heard that their brother would be moving in with them.

"Yay! I love having Ian staying with us!"

Vivian had always been a lively and passionate kid, so she practically tackled Ian, wrapping her tiny, plump arms around him to welcome him in the warmest manner.

Matteo was just as excited.

However, he was still bothered by what had happened the previous night, so he held his brother's hand and asked out of concern, "Ian, are you okay? What happened last night? Is it because—?"

Ian already had his head lowered before Matteo could finish his sentence.

His expression exuded a hint of guilt and panic as he did so.

Upon noticing that, Matteo didn't say anything.

So my speculation is spot-on. He was deliberately putting on an act to prevent Mommy and Daddy from getting a divorce...

Matteo finally understood what had happened, and the way he looked at his brother changed instantly. For a moment there, he was filled with conflicting emotions. There was one thing that Matteo was certain of, though.

He never blamed Ian for his actions.

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Silly kid...

Matteo draped his tiny arm around his brother's shoulder and comforted him, "It'll be fine. I know you're only doing this to prevent Mommy and Daddy from getting a divorce, so I don't blame you at all."

Ian lifted his head upon hearing those words.

"Really?"

"Of course. That was also the issue I wanted to discuss with you when I called you earlier. I don't want them to get a divorce either, so I wanted to brainstorm some ideas with you," Matteo confessed to his brother in a low voice.

Matteo's words managed to put Ian at ease.

After clearing all misunderstandings, the three kids resumed their usual playfulness. As always, Ian was sitting quietly like a young gentleman while Matteo and Vivian caused mayhem.

About twenty minutes later, they arrived at the apartment complex.

"I wanna hold Ian's new pajamas! Give it to me!"

"Then I'll help Ian with his new slippers."

"Alright, alright. I'll take his blanket then. Shall we cook up a feast to welcome Ian?"

Sasha couldn't resist chiming in when she saw Matteo and Vivian fighting to help Ian carry his things.

Ian's lips curled up as well. He had never experienced that kind of happiness and warmth before.

Seeing his mommy and siblings help him with his things prompted him to dash over to them and take back his toiletries.

Sasha smiled as she watched her kids having fun.

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It was truly a happy and heartwarming scene.

After they got into their unit, Sasha went to make the bed for her son, but she received a call before she could finish her task.

“Hello?”

“Madam, did you take Mr. Ian over to your place?” asked Luke.

Sasha turned around and took a glance at her eldest son, who was playing with the bedsheet’s packaging with his siblings before she nodded.

“Yeah, I did. What’s wrong? Did Sebastian ask you to take him back? If so, please tell him to let Ian stay here for the night. Ian’s mood is a little off, and spending the night here with his siblings can help him relax.”

Sasha thought that Luke was calling because Sebastian wanted Ian home.

However, Luke shook his head and replied, “That’s not it, madam. His aunt is here, and Mr. Hayes told me to fetch him back for dinner.”

“Who did you say has returned?”

Sasha, who was busy making the bed, turned pale when she heard those words and froze in place like a statue.

“His aunt, Ms. Sabrina. Have you forgotten about her, madam?” asked Luke.

Luke assumed that Sasha didn’t remember, so he courteously reminded her over the phone.

Ms. Sabrina? Of course I haven’t forgotten her. How could I? I will probably remember her existence even after I die. She is the first person who taught me what being stabbed in the back felt like.

That was why Sasha remembered that woman, even after all those years. In fact, the mere mention of her name sounded like a nightmare to Sasha.

Sabrina Hayes!

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Sasha's gaze turned hostile as she replied, "Little Ian is busy today. He's sick and can't attend any social gatherings or parties."

After saying her piece, Sasha hung up the call.

Luke was utterly speechless.

Holy crap. That certainly went well. How am I going to explain all this to Mr. Hayes?

Luke felt that things had gotten out of hand.

But what he had not expected was that someone arrived at Sasha's apartment right after she hung up the call.

"Excuse me, is this Ms. Wand's place? We're here to pick Mr. Ian up."

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