

Be Gentle 1231

Chapter 1231

On the other end, Luke received a text from his subordinates on his way back from Norman Residence.

While he was waiting for the traffic light, he clicked on the text and saw that Luca was in the photo. The photo was taken on that same day. She was dressed exactly the same as early that night.

Luke called Zander and asked, "Did you send Luca back?"

"Mr. Crawford, I sent Ms. Luca back but she got off at an intersection in front of her apartment. She told me that she wanted to get something and asked for me not to wait for her." Zander did not dare to miss any details and told Luke everything that he remembered.

Luke responded, "I see."

After that, he cut off the call.

He glanced at the photo again. 'Luca lied when she told Zander she wanted to buy something. The truth is that she was going to the Westin Hotel. What was she doing there?'

Luke thought back to the time when Luca told him that he would not be able to find anything when he wanted to dig into the matter.

'How did she know that I wouldn't be able to find anything? Luca seems to be hiding a lot of secrets.'

Luke's phone rang and he pressed to answer. The maid said anxiously, "Young Master Luke, Madam is having a high fever again and it reached 105 degrees Fahrenheit. The doctor asked you to come to the hospital immediately."

"I'm on my way."

up. When the red light turned to green, he made a U-turn and drove to the

he arrived at the ward, it just so happened that Dr. Blake, the head physician of the internal medicine department, was checking on Bianca. When Dr. Blake saw the number on the thermometer, he frowned and said, "Didn't her temperature go down when

Blake, but the patient's temperature went up again," the nurse said helplessly as she looked at Bianca who was a little groggy from the high fever. She was unsure of why Bianca's condition was fluctuating.

her the fever-reducing injection and prepare a bottle of saline. Her recurrent high fever will make her dehydrated. She needs to start fasting. We'll run a blood test tomorrow morning." Dr. Blake made the arrangements for Bianca's

The nurse nodded and said to the maid, "The patient needs to fast. If she's thirsty, you can moisten her lips with a cotton

maid took notes. She was dumbfounded at Bianca's condition after taking care of her in the hospital for the

'What's wrong with her...'

walked into the ward and asked, "Why is my wife suffering from recurrent

recognized Luke and respectfully said, "Mr. Crawford, we don't know much at the moment but we'll find out more after the blood test report is out

lay weakly on the hospital bed, heard his voice and wanted to open her eyes to look at him.

Unfortunately, the fever was draining her energy and there was nothing she

looked at how uncomfortable she looked and pursed his

"Mr. Crawford, don't worry. We'll do our best to cure Mrs. Crawford," Dr. Blake said. He was confident that he could *heal her*.

"Then what are you still doing here?" Luke asked indifferently.

What he needed was not someone who made empty promises but someone who could get things done.

Dr. Blake was stunned. He did not expect Luke to react as such. However, he could not afford to offend him, so he nodded and immediately walked out of the ward to update his treatment plan.

After a while, the nurse walked in with the saline and swiftly set up the drip for Bianca.

The maid looked at Luke who was standing in the center of the ward and said, "Young Master Luke, you should sit and rest for a while. Madam will be fine. I believe that her fever will go away soon **enough**."

"*She's* been in this condition since the afternoon?" Luke asked. In the afternoon, Bianca also had a high fever but he could not get out of the meeting he was having then. After the meeting was over, the maid told him that she was doing better after the doctors treated her.

"Yes." The maid nodded. "Her fever would suddenly spike up. Things would be normal for the first half an hour but the fever would come out of nowhere. However, as soon as she's injected with the meds, her body temperature would lower."

Luke stared at Bianca. Her condition was worse than the night *before*.

After she adjusted the speed of the drip, the nurse said, "The drip can't go any faster. With this speed, it should take two hours for the saline to finish. Those taking care of the patient can take a short *break*."

maid thanked her. "Okay, I see. Thank

the nurse left, Luke looked at the large bottle of saline and kept

had her eyes closed, she was conscious. She wanted to act coquettish in front of Luke to gain his sympathy, but at that moment, she could only lay on the bed. She felt as though her body was not her

maid glanced at the time and noted that it was late. She looked at Bianca and thought that her condition seemed to be improving, so she suggested, "Young Master Luke, why don't you go back and rest first? I'll keep watch

his wrist and glanced at the time. It was

thought about it and replied, "Stay and take care of her for another night. I'll have someone else come and replace

you, Young Master Luke." The maid thanked him happily. She felt more tired taking care of Bianca compared to having to clean Crawford Manor. She was very happy to find out that she would not need to stay in the

was on the bed, felt unsettled when she heard that Luke was leaving. She tried to open her eyes but her efforts were in

medicine had taken complete control of

noticed that Bianca's eyelids were moving. He stepped forward and said in a low voice, "Bea, I'll be heading home. Have a good rest and you'll be fine when you

said that, he turned around

Chapter 1232

'Does he have too much time?'

After Dr. Cole finished speaking, Luke also said a few words. He mentioned that the spots for the off-site training were limited and the opportunity was rare. He wanted them to discuss who should go.

Everyone looked at each other. 'Does he want us to sell our work and fight for the chance?'

Luca continued looking down. Most of these so-called off-site training was for people to go have fun, which to her, felt meaningless.

That was why she kept quiet when everyone started the discussion.

When everyone was trying their best to put their names forward, Dr. Cole noticed that Luca had been quiet so he asked her, "Dr. Craw, what do you think?"

Luca looked at him suspiciously, then glanced around and noticed that everyone was looking at her.

'What do I think? I have no opinion.'

"I'll go along with the company's arrangements," Luca said.

Luca's expression was stern. Her reply had everyone's gaze shift toward him.

Dr. Cole nodded and looked at Luca as well, waiting for his response.

Luca said, "In this case, we'll make the decision based on your research progress. The two professors with the most progress on their research will get this opportunity for off-site training. After half a month, everyone will present a progress report. "

"Okay." Everyone agreed as this method of selection seemed to be the most reasonable.

even more puzzled. 'This is undoubtedly the fairest way. Luke must have already thought things through. Why did he have to come to the meeting, then?

remembered what Abel told her last night. He said that Luke was suspicious of

may seem like he was there for the meeting but in fact, he was there for her. If that was the case, Luke would surely talk to her after the

decision was made, Luke said, "We're done

the meeting room. Luca knew that he wanted to talk to her, so she stayed in her seat. After everyone left, she stood up and asked, "Mr. Crawford, is there anything else you'd like to

Luke was present at the meeting to talk to

that he had something to

She continued to sit. She was in the seat farthest away from Luke's, so she was a

to the Westin Hotel yesterday." Luke did not question her but stated

and confessed openly, "Yes, I

enough, as Abel mentioned, Luke had planted his men around the area. She was spotted as soon as she

were you there for?" Luke asked. The more he pursued it, the more enigmatic the woman in front of him

she gave him was that she was too complicated and he could not wait to find out more

"It has nothing to do with you nor the company," Luca said, choosing not to answer. No matter what she said, he would still pursue the matter. At least if she chose to keep quiet, he would not be able to find out *much*.

After all, Abel would never let him find out about his plans.

Luke was dumbfounded. The matter was of a private nature. Even if he was her boss, he had no right **to intervene**.

When Luca saw that he was staying silent, she stood up and left the meeting *room*.

Luke was left sitting in the huge meeting room alone with a gloomy look on his face.

After Luca left the meeting room, she walked back to her office. Rhett stood at the door of the office waiting for her. Seeing that she had returned, he said, "Dr. Craw, these are the documents that **you requested**."

Luca nodded and lifted her chin. "Let's talk *inside*."

"Okay," Rhett followed her into *her office*.

Luca closed the door and sat down before flipping through the documents that he had prepared. After she read through it, she said, "There was a meeting with management today. It seems there are two spots for off-site *training*."

"Have they chosen the candidates?" Rhett **asked**.

"Not yet. Mr. Crawford decided to make the selection based on everyone's research progress. See if you can find out more about how the other professors are doing," Luca said. She wanted to know the research progress of each researcher so that she could make adjustments **accordingly**.

She did not want the spot.

touched his head and mistakenly thought that Luca wanted him to learn more about the others' progress because she wanted to go for the training. He nodded and promised her, "Okay, I'll try

Technical Department had hired a group of new assistants, which meant that a research assistant reported to each researcher. He was friendly with the assistants, so it would not pose much of a challenge for him to find out

well. Thanks for going through the trouble. I have some matters to attend to and will go to the laboratory in an hour. Clean up the data." Luca picked up the research data that had been cleaned up the day prior and handed it to

Rhett took the files over with some doubts in his mind. 'Wasn't the data cleaned up matter?" Luca looked at

I'll attend to it now." Rhett did not say anything. He was happy to go along with her

was not one to make mistakes, so he thought that she asked him to clean up the data again because there was an issue with it.

left with a pile of documents, Luca leaned back in the chair. She had nothing to do and just did not want to run

not want to continue with the research now that she knew the selection for the off-site training would be based on the progress of the

to take it easy for at least half

if she did not ask Rhett to suss things out, Luca was pretty sure that she was ahead

other professors had to start their research from scratch while her research was a follow-up of Shanks' research. Her research was backed with experimental data and various supportive documents, so there would not be

would not fail as often as the other professors'

Chapter 1233

"No, but I feel a little thirsty and want to drink some water," Bianca said and looked at the maid.

The maid nodded and poured a glass of water for her immediately.

The nurse stepped forward with a smile and said, "You can drink water after your blood is drawn. If you have the appetite, you can also have some oats. Try to eat something light for the next few days."

Bianca looked at the needle and became alert. "Why do you want to draw my blood?"

She remembered that Abel said not to go for blood tests because her blood type was different from the real Bianca.

Luke was a smart man. There was a higher chance of her getting exposed if she went through with the blood test.

Seeing her strong reaction, the nurse explained patiently, "You've been hospitalized for 24 hours, but the high fever is recurrent. We need to do further examinations to find out what's going on with your body."

Bianca shook her head and turned her down. "I'm fine now. It's okay, I don't need to go for a check-up."

She thought that she could only go for the blood test on an empty stomach, so she picked up the glass of water that the maid had placed on the bedside table and drank it all.

"Mrs. Crawford, you..." The nurse was speechless.

The maid was also dumbfounded and did not expect such a thing to happen. Bianca chugged a glass of water just so that her blood would not be drawn?

'It's just getting her blood drawn. Why is she so afraid that she'd do this...'

she drank the glass of water, Bianca said to the nurse, "I'm in good health so you don't need to draw my blood for examination. If you insist on drawing my blood, I'll sue

Bianca was insistent, the nurse had no choice but to call for

wanted to explain it to her when he heard about it, but Bianca started

that I don't want to do it! If you insist on drawing my blood, I want to be discharged from the hospital

Blake had no choice but to go along with her. "Okay, Mrs. Crawford, please calm down. I'll cancel the blood test for you. It's best that you stay in the hospital for observation because of your recurrent

with staying in the hospital, I just don't want to do a blood test." Bianca made her stance

Blake nodded and said to the nurse, "Help Mrs. Crawford cancel her inspection and tell the laboratory department that there's no blood sample for them to work on

given the laboratory a heads up and asked them for a favor to give Bianca priority, but he did not expect that she would react

had no choice but to cancel the test.

Blake." The nurse nodded and

Blake helped Bianca take her temperature. Seeing that she was fine, he turned around and left

that Johann had done him a favor by introducing him to this job, but unexpectedly, Bianca was such a difficult person to deal with. She had a recurring fever and he was certain that something was wrong with her body. She had to go through a blood test for him to be able to find out why.

The next time she had a fever, all he could do was give her an injection to reduce the fever but he knew that was not a long-term solution.

Dr. Blake was afraid of being blamed, so he called Luke and informed him of Bianca's refusal to do a blood **test**.

Luke was still sitting in the meeting room at that moment. His expression turned stern when he heard what Dr. Blake *said*.

"Thank you for letting me know. I'll talk to her and find out what's going on," he said. Luke then hung up the call with Dr. Blake and called **Bianca**.

Bianca was drinking the oats the maid had prepared for her when her phone rang. When she saw that Luke was calling, she jumped for *joy!*

She pressed to answer. "Luke, the doctor said that I can't be discharged yet and have to stay in the hospital for **observation**."

"Listen to the doctor." Luke listened to her coquettish voice and thought that she was in a good state of mind.

"Mm, I'll listen to the doctor. Why didn't you come to see me today?" Bianca's tone was a little sad. Even though she was dissatisfied with him, she did not dare to make it **too obvious**.

Luke explained, "I had a morning meeting today. I'll come visit you in the evening."

"In that case..." Bianca was still dissatisfied. Whenever something happened, she could tell that that work was more important to Luke than her. She grabbed her phone tightly.

"Why didn't you take a blood test?" **Luke asked**.

Bianca knew that he would ask about this. She explained in a coquettish tone, "I'm hemophobic and the process is so painful... Also, I'm fine. I just accidentally caught a cold. My health is not the best, that's why the fever keeps coming back."

was indifferent to her coquettish ways. His voice was stern as he said, "Follow the doctor's instructions and go for a check-up. It'll make me feel more at

want to, and I've already eaten breakfast. The blood test has to be done on an empty stomach. Let's talk about it later." Bianca thought to delay it as long as she

Blake left the ward, she knew that he would notify Luke immediately. Hence, she ate breakfast just so that they could not draw her

Luke kept quiet.

noticed his silence and knew that she was being too childish. She coaxed him, saying, "Don't worry, I'll be fine. Maybe I can be discharged and go home after

voice was calm and carried no

said, "Okay, I'll continue to eat breakfast. Get back to work and remember to visit me tonight, or else I'll be

After Luke said that, Bianca put down the phone. After he heard the busy tone, he stood up, picked up the folder on the table, and walked out of the

was organized by the

to the meeting to ask Luca questions and because he wanted to see her reactions that Luca may be involved with the Pharmaceutical

later, Rhett knocked on the door of Luca's

Chapter 1234

After Rhett left, Luca continued to browse the net and read the news.

She thought of Amur when she saw the news of a wealthy businessman who was brutally murdered in his villa. She took out her phone and called him.

However, it seemed that his phone was turned off.

With no other choice, Luca had to put down the phone. She thought that Amur should have arrived at the Island of Despair by now, but for some reason, her heart just could not settle down.

Luca's expression turned solemn when she thought of what Abel said.

The phone rang. Luca picked up the phone and glanced at it. It was a call from an unfamiliar number based in A City.

Luca picked it up and a kiddish voice sounded from the other end of the call. "Ms. Luca, I'm Tommy!"

Of course, she knew who was on the other end of the phone.

Luca chuckled softly, and the sadness in her eyes melted away when she heard Tommy's voice. "I know. Why did you call me? Isn't it time for school?"

"I borrowed the teacher's phone to call you." Tommy glanced at the teacher with a cheeky grin on his face. It had taken him some effort to convince the teacher to lend him her phone.

"Mm, have you been good in school?" Luca asked. Tommy was different from Lanie and Rainie. He was active and lively, so it took a little more effort to manage him.

"Of course, I'm a good boy!" Tommy puffed his chest proudly and thought about why he called her. He said, "Ms. Luca, can I go to your house tonight?"

my house?" Luca frowned slightly and wondered whether it was his idea or

Tommy nodded quickly. "I miss your

could not bring herself to turn him down when she heard Tommy's cheeky voice. Since Amur had returned to the Island of Despair and there was no one else in the apartment, she wanted to see her

she thought of Luke, she hesitated and asked, "Did your father agree to

said yes. Dad has been busy lately and has no time to take care of us. By the way, Ms. Luca, can I bring my brother and sister? We'll be good, we promise!" Tommy was worried that she would not agree so he made sure she had no reason

softened when she knew that Luke would not show up and did not stop Tommy either. She planned to pick up the kids after she got off work and then go to the supermarket to buy groceries, just like before. "Okay, I'll pick you up

about it for a while. He did not want to trouble her by having her drive back and forth, so he said, "Ms. Luca, don't worry. Zander will send us there, I remember

had only been there once but he remembered the name of Luca's building and the floor she stayed

on Luca's face grew bigger and bigger when she noticed how sensible her baby boy had grown. She said joyfully, "Okay, do you have anything in particular you want to eat? Also, what do your brother and sister like to

so many years, she was not sure if Lanie and Rainie's taste had

anything you cook," Tommy said with a smile. Even though Lanie and Rainie had not tried Luca's cooking, he believed that they would

though it was a perfunctory reply, because it came out of Tommy's mouth, Luca felt

"Okay, see you tonight." She smiled and was overjoyed that she would be able to see her kids without having to meet *Luke*.

Luca sat in the chair and glanced at the time, hoping that it would *pass sooner*.

The phone rang again. Luca's smile gradually disappeared when she saw the *caller ID*.

It was a random string of numbers, but she knew that it was Abel's number.

The phone rang twice and Luca slowly pressed the button to answer. She kept quiet and just listened to the person on the other end of the phone.

Abel was not the one who spoke but a man with a rough voice. "Ivana, the boss has given an order. You must secure a spot for the off-site training."

"Off-site training?" Luca's mood sank. She suddenly thought of something and calmly said, "I want to talk *to him*."

The man laughed disdainfully and said mercilessly, "The boss isn't here, you just need to do what he **tells you**."

He hung up the phone immediately *after*.

When she heard the busy tone, Luca put her phone aside and was furious. She opened the safe and took out the research *materials*.

She thought the off-training was planned by the company and did not expect that Abel was involved. She had no choice even if she did not want to go. After all, the order came *from Abel*.

take action if the spot was given to others in the

already begun to suspect her and she was determined not to let him find out more. Her next steps had to be

her office holding the documents and walked to the

and Rhett were the only ones around. The other research assistants were not there. Luca guessed that they were all busy doing

Craw?" Rhett saw her walk in and stood up

nodded and said to him, "Let's start with our

was surprised but did not question her. He walked out with a pile

The two walked to the laboratory.

way, Luca asked Rhett, "At what stage of the experiment will the company assign additional headcount to the

as the first stage is completed and the report is complete and submitted, there'll be additional headcount and an independent laboratory,"

hurry up," Luca said. In the early stages of the experiment, she delayed the work as long as she could so she would not progress to the next stage as the findings were not ready yet. She thought that doing so, it would not attract Luke's

unintentional actions and Abel's plot had attracted

Chapter 1235

Luca knew that several of them were looking at her but she walked out of the laboratory with the documents in her hand without a care in the world.

Rhett quickly grabbed the other documents and followed her.

After they walked out of the laboratory, Rhett looked back at his colleagues who were working overtime. He could not help but whisper what he was thinking about, "Dr. Craw, you've been acting a little abnormal today."

In the past, Luca was the most diligent and serious in the Technical Department.

When the researchers were lazing around in their office, she was spending all her time in the laboratory doing experiments and running comparative analyses of various data.

"Is that so?" Luca knew what he meant by that.

"Yes." Rhett touched his chin. There was no one around him, so he could speak whole-heartedly. "Dr. Craw, I've asked around and it seems that the other professors' research progress is pretty good, especially Dr. Cole's..."

Although the other professors had no sense of urgency to complete their research, they were all capable. Otherwise, they would not be able to join Watson Biopharmaceuticals.

"I see. Make sure you save the data before you get off work." Luca opened the door of the office and thought about what she was going to cook for the kids for dinner.

Her tone remained calm as if she had no intention of competing with the others. Rhett was confused and scratched his head.

After Luca closed the door, Rhett walked back to the assistants' office.

Mo was tidying up her desk in preparation to get off work. When she saw him, Mo was puzzled and asked, "You're getting off work now? Don't you need to work overtime?"

on what she had noticed, the other laboratory assistants should be working overtime with their respective

done with work for the day, Dr. Craw won't be working overtime tonight," Rhett said as he placed the data on

her eyebrows. "Dr. Craw is not planning to fight for a spot for the off-site training? The other professors are working overtime to

don't know." Rhett shook his head. After Mo mentioned it, he suddenly felt that Luca did not care about the

had asked him to find out about the research progress of other professors, her actions did not make it seem like she wanted to fight

was interested when she saw Rhett deep in thought. She stopped tidying up and sat in a chair to gossip. "To be fair, Dr. Craw comes from a strong background. This off-site training doesn't affect her, but you... Oh, what a pity! If Dr. Craw goes for the training, she'll take you with her and it would be great for your portfolio and personal

was not infuriated by her words. After all, he chose to be Luca's assistant. "That's enough. This is Dr. Craw's

it's Dr. Craw's decision. You're giving her everything you have but she doesn't think about what's good for you at all." Mo could not take how Rhett backed Luca

joined Watson Biopharmaceuticals at the same time and were both supposed to be office assistants, but in a blink of an eye, he teamed up with Luca, the only female researcher in this department. Of course, Mo suspected that there was more than met the eye regarding why he did

that she was just talking nonsense and

sank when she saw him lowering his head and stuffing the experimental data back into his

is upset because I said something about his precious Luca? Is he in love with

Mo was upset and asked, "Why are you so quiet? You don't have to be discouraged. Maybe Dr. Craw has secured one of the spots, so she's so calm. I should congratulate **you!**"

Listening to her words, Rhett looked up suddenly and asked, "What are you talking about?"

"Don't you know? Dr. Craw is close with the CEO, so..." Mo said, "Anyway, congratulations. I'm heading off. Do you want to leave **together?**"

"I have to sort out the data, I'll see you tomorrow." Rhett took out the data he had just stuffed in the drawer and pretended to be busy.

Mo saw that he was unwilling to go with her. She glared at him before turning to leave with her **bag**.

When she got to the elevator, she happened to bump into Luca.

Mo smiled and greeted her, "Dr. Craw, what a coincidence. Are you done with work?"

"**Yeah**," Luca looked at her, then continued to look at *her phone*.

Seeing that she was neither hot nor cold, Mo narrowed her mouth and cursed Luca in her heart.

Before the elevator reached their floor, she said, "Dr. Craw, are you planning to fight for the opportunity to go for the training in New York?"

"I'll go with the flow." Luca was looking up recipes because she wanted to make delicious dishes so the children would be **happy**.

even more disdainful in her heart when she heard Luca's answer. 'Go with the flow? I'm sure she already has everything planned and got the spot after pulling some

convinced that it was the

they left the office, she looked at Luca walking to the taxi stand while she could only walk to the

both working for Watson Biopharmaceuticals but Luca can take a taxi to and from work while I'm forced to take the bus.' Mo's emotions were a little imbalanced. She took out her phone and sent a text message to

firmly believed that Bianca, Luke's wife, would

a taxi and purchased two full bags of groceries from a supermarket near

arrived home, she took off her coat and put on an apron. She planned to make some snacks for the children before she

quickly, and before Zander sent the kids over, she put the cake in the oven to

She remembered that Rainie loved desserts.

doorbell rang and Luca knew that the kids were her. She walked quickly to the door and put her hand on the doorknob but did not open the

three kids were standing outside

Luca was nervous.

Chapter 1236

Lanie and Rainie came to see what kind of person it was who could make Tommy talk about her cooking non-stop. They also wanted to see if the other party wanted to use Tommy to approach their father.

After all, there had been quite a few women like that over the years.

Luca's eyes were filled with tears when she heard the kids greeting her. She was moved when she saw how tall Lanie and Rainie had become. "Hello, come in."

She reached her hand out to both of them.

Rainie felt inexplicably affectionate toward Luca and held her hand. "Okay."

Lanie felt the same way as her sister but chose to nod coolly. They then walked into the apartment together.

Zander smiled and said, "Ms. Luca, thank you for the trouble."

Luca was surprised. "Zander, won't you come in and have dinner with us?"

"I don't have time. I have to send documents to the boss," Zander shook his head and said.

Luca was surprised. Luke must have agreed to him leaving the children here to send the documents to him.

'He agreed to let me take care of the kids? He's suspicious by nature... That shouldn't be the case... Could it be that he trusts me?'

However, based on their previous encounters and the conversation in the meeting room, it did not make sense that Luke trusted her...

did not force him to stay knowing that he had a task

at the time, then smiled and said, "Ms. Luca, I'll pick them up around nine o'clock. See you

Tommy heard that, he immediately said, "Zander, you can come here a little later than

Tommy, you have to go to class tomorrow and need to rest early. I'll pick you up at nine o'clock. Your father will scold me if I send you home late." Zander insisted. Nine o'clock was the time that Luke and Tommy had agreed

pursed his mouth. He made a bunch of promises just so he could come to Luca's

he compromised and agreed to reduce the time he had to watch cartoons by half an

and nodded. He then turned

still could not believe it. Luke trusted her enough to leave the three children by her side for a few hours. In a daze, she thought about the first time she returned to A City after

knew that Lanie and Rainie were her kids, so he tried her best to let her take care of

this time, he could not

the door in

Tommy took a deep breath and smelled the cake. His eyes lit up as he asked, "Ms. Luca, are you hiding some delicious **food?**"

Luca came back to her senses. She looked at the child's bright eyes, smiled, and said, "I knew you were coming so I made a cake, but you'll have to wait for a while before you can eat it."

"*Cake? Rainie* loves cakes!" Tommy grinned and took Rainie's hand. He said, "Rainie, didn't I tell you that Ms. Luca is the best? She made you a cake! Ms. Luca, we all like to eat cakes."

Rainie touched Tommy's chubby face. She was happy because she loved cakes, but she was picky and only liked to eat the cakes made by her mother.

The chef in Crawford Manor had tried a variety of recipes to make all kinds of cakes to bring a smile to her face. In the end, only one recipe worked as it tasted a bit like the ones Bianca used to make, so she would only **eat that**.

She was not a fan of those made by others or bought from local *shops*.

However, her mother...

Luca looked at the kids. They had grown a little taller and their fleshy faces had become thinner, but the rest was still *the same*.

"*I'm happy* if you're happy," she smiled **and said**.

"*Thank you*, Ms. Luca. I'm Rainie. This is my brother, Blanche. You can call him Lanie." Rainie looked at Luca's smile. The feeling of intimacy and familiarity in her heart got stronger. She could not help but introduce herself.

Lanie heard this and said coolly, "Hello, Ms. Luca."

"*Okay, you* can sit down for a while. The cake will be ready soon," Luca said. In addition to the cake, she had also prepared some fruits that the children used to **love**.

the fruits on the coffee table, Tommy cheered and asked, "Ms. Luca, do you have any

and nodded at Tommy's cheeky appearance. "Yes, but you can eat them only after you finish your meal. Have some

soon as she said that, the oven rang to indicate that the cake was ready. Luca said, "The cake is ready, I'll take it out for you but don't eat too much. There's still dinner

his stomach and replied, "Ms. Luca, don't worry. My stomach can hold a lot of food. I'll finish everything that

smiled and shook her head. 'How big can a child's stomach be?' She only said that because she did not want them to be too full. "I'll take three out first. You can take the rest back after

who was sitting on the sofa, looked at this scene with deep emotions stirring in

father and grandfather were strict with them. They never allowed them any snacks

their fake mom was different. To please them, she secretly gave them

what it was, both sides were overdoing it. She thought that Luca was different

being overly strict or indulgent, Rainie found her approach

took out three cakes from the oven. The cakes were not big but they were just right as snacks before meals. They were delicious

Chapter 1237

Rainie noticed the change in Lanie's expression and asked in a confused tone, "Lanie, what's the matter with you?"

"Rainie, I think you'll like it," Lanie said as he put another piece of fluffy cake in his mouth. Even though he was surprised, he still ate it like a gentleman.

Rainie looked at the cake and was debating internally on whether she should try it or not.

After she thought about it for a while, she picked up the fork, took a small piece, and put it in her mouth.

Tommy blinked and asked with a smile, "Rainie, how is it? Isn't it delicious?"

Rainie showed a shocked expression as she uttered, "This cake..."

She did not continue talking. It may have been a long time but the taste was exactly the same as what she remembered. It was even more delicious than the ones the chef at home prepared.

Tommy noted their expressions and proudly stood up, saying, "I knew that you'd like the cakes made by Ms. Luca!"

Rainie had a complicated expression on her face as she looked at Blanche.

Maybe her memory was messed up but she thought that although the taste was a little similar to what the chef made, it tasted much better. The cake tasted exactly the same as the cakes their mother made back then.

Blanche nodded and said, "Let's eat."

"Yeah." Rainie felt like tearing up. She lowered her head and enjoyed the cake as she listened to the noise in the kitchen.

An hour later, Luca was done cooking and started serving dinner. The smell of the dishes filled the apartment.

took a deep breath greedily. Before he ate, he praised Luca. "Ms. Luca, the food smells

smiled at the three children and said, "Let's get ready for dinner. You should wash your hands

Ms. Luca." Rainie nodded and looked

face was unfamiliar, she made cakes that tasted the same as their mom's. 'No wonder Tommy likes her thought that Luca had ill intentions, but at that moment, she did not think

who could make cakes that tasted the same as their Mom's should not be

raised his hand, and said, "Yes, Ms.

to his siblings and said, "Lanie, Rainie, come with me! Let's wash our

lived here for a while and was familiar with the layout. He led them to the bathroom like he owned the

looked at the kids and smiled. With them around, it was as though she had gone back three years in time. All of the tiredness and sadness melted away the moment she saw them. All that was left in her heart was a

the kids washed their hands and walked out, Luca had already brought out all the

smells good." Tommy hopped to his seat and let out

Luca said, "I'm sure you're hungry. Come, sit down **and eat.**"

The three children nodded and sat on the chairs. Lanie and Rainie looked at the home-cooked dishes and glanced at each **other**.

The dishes were ordinary home-cooked food but the color and fragrance were top-notch. They were curious if the food tasted as good as it looked.

Rainie thought of the cake she had just eaten and looked forward to the meal. 'The cake Ms. Luca made tasted the same as the cakes Mom used to make. I wonder if this meal will also taste the same as Mom's cooking...'

"*Thank* you for cooking for us!" Although he had eaten some cake just earlier, Tom felt hungry when he smelled the aroma of the meal. He picked up his utensils and *dug in*.

Luca noticed that Lanie and Rainie were not moving, so she said, "You guys should eat too."

Tommy looked at his sibling, swallowed the food in his mouth, and said, "Yes, Lanie and Rainie, eat! **It's delicious!**"

Lanie was speechless seeing Tommy acting as though he had not eaten anything for three days. He picked up the cutlery and slowly started eating.

When he took the first bite, he was still calm, but after tasting it, he paused and finally understood why Tommy always clamored to come here for dinner. The food she cooked was very similar to the food their mom *cooked*.

After three years, he finally got to taste it again. Lanie had always been calm but could not help tearing a little.

Rainie reacted the same way. As she ate, she felt like she was about to cry.

The taste was so similar to their mom's cooking. Rainie looked at *Luca*.

She had taken a bite and just watched them eating silently. The loving look in her eyes was just like *their Mom's*.

suddenly felt like holding her and

what's the matter? You don't like any of the food I cooked?" Luca asked worriedly when she saw that the girl had only taken a bite and stopped

not it. Ms. Luca, the food you cook is so delicious. Can I learn to cook from you?"

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"Also, Ms. Luca, the cake you made is delicious. Can I ask you for the

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dinner, the kids sat on the sofa and ate fruits while watching

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Chapter 1237

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Chapter 1238

Tommy's eyes sparkled when he saw the cupcakes.

Luca noticed the change in Tommy's expression and shook her head. "Not now, Tommy. Eat them when you get home."

"Can't I just eat one, Ms. Luca?" Tommy lifted one finger and looked at Luca eagerly. "I'm hungry."

Luca's heart melted when she saw Tommy's puppy eyes, though she knew that he had eaten a lot earlier, and she did not think that his stomach could take it. She steeled herself and shook her head.

"You've just eaten. How can you be hungry? Be a good boy and listen to me."

Rainie also helped Luca convince her younger brother. "You'll get a tummy ache if you continue eating, Tommy. Ms. Luca said that we can bring the cupcakes home, so you can eat them when we get home."

Tommy rubbed his round stomach. He was indeed full, but he wanted to eat some more. Even so, he listened to Luca and Rainie. He nodded his head and tried to control himself.

Luca could not bear to see Tommy like that. She sat down next to him and picked two cherries from the fruit plate. "Why not have some fruit for now?"

"Mm! Feed me, Ms. Luca!" Tommy immediately cheered up. He opened his mouth and waited to be fed.

Luca smiled, plucked the stems from the cherries, and stuffed the cherries into his mouth.

Rainie suddenly felt envious when she saw their interaction. They looked like mother and son, and she wanted to be pampered like that too.

Ever since their mother went missing, she had never been pampered by anyone.

As she stared at them, the eagerness in her eyes grew.

Luca inadvertently noticed that from the corner of her eye. She smiled and tapped the seat next to her. "Rainie, do you want to sit here?"

surprised, though she did not hesitate to sit down next

smiled and handed her two round and sweet cherries. "Do you want

you," Rainie said courteously, took the cherries, slowly plucked their stems, and put them in her

became emotional when she saw how quiet and gentle Rainie was. Lanie was more reserved than Rainie, but they were active children, especially Rainie, who was cute, obedient, and

the twins were a lot quieter and more

if it was because the twins lacked motherly care or if their environment caused them to be like

the reason why she and Luke moved out of Crawford Manor. She did not wish for their children to grow up in that toxic and

she was abducted, Luke and the three children moved back to Crawford Manor so that the children had someone to take care of them. Even though Allison was already in prison, Susan was still living in Crawford Manor, and Luca knew what kind of person

not expect the impostor Bianca to take care of the children

Luca thought of that, she patted Rainie's head

the sensation of Luca's soft hand caressing her hair. Somehow, she felt the urge to be closer

hand is so soft, Ms. Luca," Rainie lifted her head and looked at Luca with sparkling eyes. She thought that it was not enough, so she added, "You smell very nice too,

Luca smiled. She noticed that Lanie was looking at them. However, the seats on both sides **were taken**.

Luca picked Tommy up and placed him on **her lap**.

"**Ms. Luca?**" Tommy looked at Luca, slightly confused, though he was quite happy that he got to sit on **her lap**.

"*Why* don't you come and sit over here, Lanie?" Luca said to the boy. Lanie might not seem too eager, but as his birth mother, Luca knew what he **was thinking**.

Even though Lanie was much more mature than children of his age, he was still a child and wished to be *treated equally*.

Lanie nodded. Without hesitation, he sat down by **her side**.

Luca's heart warmed when she felt the three children surrounding her. Subconsciously, she hugged Tommy more tightly.

"I want more cherries, Ms. Luca," Tommy pouted and *said*.

"**Alright**, I'll get them for you," Luca said with a smile. She leaned forward and picked up the entire fruit plate. "Here, have some *more cherries*."

The three children took turns picking cherries from the plate.

Tommy was enjoying himself as he sat on Luca's lap and leaned against her. At nine o'clock sharp, a knock was heard on the door.

"**That must** be Uncle Zander," Tommy pouted and **said reluctantly**.

at the wall clock. Sean had told her that he would pick up the children at nine o'clock. She put Tommy down even though she was quite reluctant. "It's already so late. I'll go and open the

looked at his elder siblings. They must be reluctant to

opened the door and was shocked when she saw the person standing

did not see Sean. Instead, the person to pick up the children

you here, Mr. Crawford?" Luca

here for my children." Seeing that Luca had no intention of inviting him in, Luke squeezed past Luca and went into

Luca came to her senses, Luke was already inside the house. She had no chance to stop

three children stood up together when they saw that it was their father. "Daddy," they greeted him in

go home." Luke was standing near the couch. First, he glanced at the children, then he looked around

was wondering what he

not ready to go home yet. He quickly ran over to Luke, hugged his thigh, and asked him, "Daddy, have you had

looked at his youngest son and raised an

Chapter 1239

Luca's eyes opened wide. She did not expect Luke to sit down, much less eat a cupcake.

Rainie picked up a cupcake and peeled the liner away. "Try one, Daddy."

Luke took the cupcake. It looked petite and delicate in his hand.

He was not very fond of cake, but he had to try the cupcake that Luca baked.

The three children looked at him eagerly.

In one bite, Luke ate half of the cupcake. Luke carefully tasted the sweetness of the cake that melted in his mouth, though he seemed to be pondering something.

He finished the rest of the cupcake in another bite.

Rainie smiled and asked him, "Daddy, isn't it very tasty?"

"Not bad." When Luke said that, he turned around to glance at Luca. Luca was standing there ever since Luke came into the house, as though she were the guest.

Rainie smiled at Luca. "Ms. Luca, Daddy likes your cupcakes!"

Tommy also added, "Daddy doesn't only like Ms. Luca's cupcakes. He loves her cooking too!"

Rainie nodded. It was not a surprise that their father loved Luca's cooking because it was so delicious. She picked up another cupcake and said, "Have another one, Daddy!"

took it and ate

been silent all the while. He suddenly said, "Daddy, I guess you haven't

replied casually. He was busy with work at the company. After that, he had to go to the hospital to check on Bianca before coming to Luca's apartment to pick up the children. He did not have the time

tenderly, "You must be too busy with work, Daddy. Uncle Johann said that you shouldn't skip dinner because of your

slightly taken aback when she heard what Rainie

did Luke have gastric problems? She guessed that it must be because of his

his hands on his waist as though he was ready to reprimand his father too. "Rainie is right, Daddy. You shouldn't

did not say anything when his children reprimanded him. Instead, he reached out to take another

he did not feel that he was hungry, but after eating two cupcakes, he realized that his stomach had been

slightly worried when he saw that his father was going to eat all the cupcakes. Immediately, he said, "You can't only have cupcakes for dinner, Daddy. Why not ask Ms. Luca to make some spaghetti for

surprised when Tommy mentioned her.

and took the plate of cupcakes away. "Ms. Luca, won't you take pity on our father? He hasn't had dinner yet, and cupcakes alone won't fill him up. Won't you make some spaghetti for

Luke did not say anything when he heard his son pleading on his behalf. He remembered how Luca's cooking tasted like, and he wanted to taste it **again**.

Luca waited for Luke to tactfully refuse, but the man said **nothing**.

Her fingers clenched the hem of her clothes. Seeing that the man did not refuse and that the children were all looking at her, she realized that she had to make that plate of spaghetti no matter what.

Tommy was happy that he managed to save the rest of the cupcakes, and he would get a taste of the spaghetti too. He looked at Luca eagerly and said, "Is it okay, *Ms. Luca*?"

Luca did not know how to say no. Luke had helped himself with the couch and the cupcakes as though he owned the place. She could only smile and ask, "Is there anything in particular that you'd like to eat, Mr. **Crawford**?"

"I'm fine with whatever," Luke said.

Luca sighed discreetly, knowing how hard he was to please. "I'll just make you spaghetti with tomato sauce then."

"Okay." Luke did not complain. He would eat whatever Luca cooked, even if it were literally only spaghetti and tomato *sauce*.

Luca nodded slightly. She knew that Luke would not leave if she did not produce a plate of spaghetti **for him**.

She walked into the kitchen and took out a pack of spaghetti she had bought earlier. She had bought that pack earlier, and she did not expect that it would come into use *so quickly*.

While the water boiled, Luca thought that she should add something to the meal. She mixed some minced pork into the sauce and blanched some vegetables. In total, she made two portions.

the sauce was done, she seasoned it with some chopped herbs to make it taste even

brought the plate to the dining table and said, "Your spaghetti is ready, Mr.

Luke stood up from the couch and walked over while the three children followed behind

was caught in a daze when she saw that scene. Three years ago, she had made supper for Luke, who had skipped dinner because he worked overtime. The three children had also followed behind him just to get a taste of

so good," Tommy exclaimed as he stared eagerly at the spaghetti on the dining

some for you too," Luca said. "Sit down at the table, and I'll get you

of the portions was for Luke, while the other was to be shared among the

eyes sparkled when he heard that Luca had made supper for him too. He sat down on the chair and said, "How did you know that I'm hungry again? You're so nice to me,

and Rainie sat on their respective chairs

the other portion of spaghetti into three bowls and brought them out to the dining table. "You had dinner and dessert earlier, so I didn't cook too much

children took a whiff of the spaghetti that was served in front of them, and they said, "This smells so that Luca did not make spaghetti for herself. She asked, "Aren't you eating, Ms.

Chapter 1240

Luca was cleaning up the coffee table. She was quite surprised when she heard Luke's praise.

He had always been a man of few words, especially when talking about other people.

Luca did not expect that the plate of spaghetti would receive his approval.

She took out a plastic bag from under the coffee table, and it was filled with Tommy's favorite snacks. She put the remaining fruit from the plate inside the bag too.

If Tommy liked those snacks, Lanie and Rainie would like them too. That was why she bought triple the usual quantity of snacks from the supermarket.

While Luca was done cleaning the coffee table, she heard Luke ask her, "Where is your younger brother?"

When he noticed that they were walking out of the neighborhood together the last time, he could tell that they were living together.

"He's away on a business trip," Luca answered calmly. Business trips were always the best excuse.

Luke twirled another forkful of spaghetti, blew on it to cool it down a little, and carefully put it into his mouth. After chewing it slowly, he said, "You didn't write that on your resumé."

Luca did not know what he was talking about. "Write what?"

"That you have a younger brother," Luke said. He had always thought that Luca looked very different from her younger brother, and he could not have told that the two people were siblings had Luca not told him.

"I don't think that's necessary information, isn't it?" Luca said, not feeling guilty about the lie. She had always treated Amur as her younger brother.

If he decided to probe into the matter, she could easily find explanations for it too.

Fortunately, Luke did not ask any further questions.

children looked at each other, then shot a glance at their father and the person sitting on the couch. For some reason, the atmosphere was really

ask something? That was what they thought, but no one asked anything despite the suspicions in their was done eating after taking two bites. She hopped off the chair, went to Luca's side, and picked up the rag on the coffee table. "Let me help you,

took the rag away from her hand and shook her head. "Don't worry about it. I've already cleaned the coffee table earlier. Here, take

took the bag and asked,

are snacks for you," Luca explained. She could not help but pat Rainie's

smiled sheepishly. She was not fond of other people patting her head, but she was not repulsed by Luca's actions at all. Instead, she hoped that Luca would pat her head

so nice, Ms. Luca. Thank you," she

just finished his spaghetti. When he heard that Luca had prepared snacks for them, he hopped off the table and ran toward Luca. "Thank you, Ms. Luca!" He

Luca patted his head too. She heard the soft sound of chair legs rubbing against the floor and turned her head toward the dining

had already finished his spaghetti. He stood up and looked at

the moment their eyes met, Luca's heart started beating

"Let's go," Luke suddenly said.

Lanie and Rainie nodded, though Tommy was quite reluctant. He would not mind staying with Luca for another week, even though his father and elder siblings would not *be there*.

"Daddy, shouldn't you thank Ms. Luca?" Tommy suddenly said. "Ms. Luca made delicious spaghetti for you, and you should thank her. My teacher said that we should **be grateful**."

"..." Luke was speechless after being rebuked by his son. He thought that what Tommy said was **correct**.

Luca smiled when Tommy spoke up for her, but she did not want Luke to linger for **too long**.

She had never expected Luke to thank her *either*.

Whenever she faced Luke, she had to exert a great amount of restraint.

Luca stood up and was about to say "It's nothing," when Luke slowly said, "Thank **you**."

"... You're welcome," Luca said in a daze.

Tommy nodded, satisfied that his father was well-mannered. He walked up to Luke and took his right hand. "Let's go, Daddy. I'm feeling sleepy."

He knew that his father would not allow him to stay over, so he might as well leave.

"Mm." *Luke* nodded and turned toward the door.

Luca quickly opened the front door and said, "Take care, *Mr. Crawford*."

Luke seemed pensive when he heard her call him "Mr. Crawford," thinking that she was trying to distance herself from him once more. "We're not in the office?"

Luca lifted her head and looked at him. Her heart skipped a beat when she saw what Luke was

can call me something else," Luke said while stepping through the door while holding Tommy's hand. Lanie and Rainie were following

Luca nodded and said, "Yes, Sir."

"..."

thought that Luca would call him something more intimate, but "Sir" was even

there was nothing wrong with

turned around and waved goodbye

and waved at

seeing Luke and the children step into the elevator, Luca closed the front door and leaned her back

her eyes and took deep breaths. Some time later, she slowly opened her eyes and gently tapped on

scent seemed to linger in

remembered Luke's pensive gaze, her eyes filled up with

knew how to torment her. It was cruel not to be able to love the man