

Be Gentle 1401

Chapter 1401

Even though Luca's research team had moved to T Corporation, they soon knew what happened at Watson.

A researcher told Luca that Talia had passed out and was sent to the hospital by an ambulance.

She stopped working and turned her head to look at the researcher. "Talia Sullivan? Is that Dr. Kidman's assistant?"

"Yes. The people in the company chat group are all talking about it. They said that she passed out in Dr. Kidman's office. Before that, they seemed to be arguing about something," the researcher said.

Luca raised her eyebrows. She was not interested in company gossip, and she had left her phone in the office. She turned around and continued her research.

"Dr. Craw, do you know why they were arguing?" The researcher asked.

"How would I know?" Luca said, though she guessed that they must have had a disagreement. She swirled the test tube in her hand and said, "How would the people there know that they were arguing? Dr. Kidman's office should be soundproofed."

"Well..." The researcher chuckled. If Cole and Talia had not been arguing especially loudly, no one would have known what they were doing in the office.

Luca continued with her experiment. She was not curious about why they were arguing, but she was curious about why Talia would suddenly pass out and require hospitalization.

Half an hour later, another researcher said, "Wow, I didn't expect Ms. Sullivan to be pregnant! No wonder she passed out in Dr. Kidman's office."

Luca paused for a while. 'Talia... is pregnant?'

"Really?" Another researcher said.

Stone accompanied Ms. Sullivan to the hospital. When the doctor announced the news, Ms. Stone was there to hear it," another researcher said. He had been following the gossip intently on

weird. I remember Ms. Sullivan said that she's single. How would she be pregnant?" Another

call yourself a researcher? If a woman makes out with a man, she'll become pregnant. It's not too far-fetched to imagine a single woman sleeping with another man, isn't

The researchers nodded in agreement.

their conversation while checking research data. She could guess what had

child in Talia's womb was most likely

though she did not express her interest in company gossip, she had investigated the backgrounds of the researchers in

married to his wife for twenty years, but his wife had poor health and was never

that Cole really wanted a child, but he wanted to leech off his wife's wealth and influence, so he gave up on the idea of becoming

that Talia was pregnant, what would

Would he proceed with his plan and let Talia take the fall for him, or would he save her because of *her baby*?

Suddenly, Luca found herself curious about how the drama would *end*.

After work, she returned to her office and prepared to leave. While packing up, she remembered the conversation among the researchers, so she took out her phone, opened the company chat group, and scrolled upward to read the conversation from earlier.

The news that Talia suddenly passed out and was found pregnant had shocked everyone in Watson. After all, everyone knew that she was single, and her sudden pregnancy became a scandal. Many people were *discussing her*.

Luca rubbed her chin. Did they forget that Talia was in the chat group *too*?

She continued to read the conversation as she walked toward the elevator lobby, her eyes transfixed on the phone screen the whole time. When she heard the bell indicating the elevator had arrived, she put her phone away and prepared to walk inside, but she saw Luke *standing there*.

It was then that Luca realized that she had accidentally pressed the button for the CEO's personal elevator...

Luca instinctively took a step back and bowed apologetically. "I'm sorry, Mr. Crawford. I didn't do it *on purpose*."

"Come in," Luke said.

Luca blinked. She pretended not to understand what Luke was saying. In a few seconds, the elevator doors would automatically *close*.

Luke did not let her get away so easily. He pressed the button to hold the doors open and said, "*Come in*."

heard the voices of other researchers around the corner. They were also getting off work. She was afraid that they might see her standing in front of Luke. Who could guess what they might

always thought that researchers would be more focused on their research than on gossip, but she realized that she was

researchers were fond of rumors and stories. If they saw her together with Luke, they would come up with a variety of theories, and the people at Watson would soon hear of

not hesitate. She walked into the elevator and said apologetically, "Pardon me,

fine." Luke pressed a button and the doors

turned the corner and arrived at the elevator lobby. From the corner of their eyes, they could see the CEO's personal elevator

that Mr. Crawford's personal elevator? Why did it stop here?" One of the researchers

not see their boss on the way to the elevator

use the CEO's personal elevator? They thought that the person was very daring. Luke was a clean freak, and if he found out that someone else had used his elevator, he would have

must have pressed the button by mistake... No one would dare to step into Mr. Crawford's elevator," the other

the elevator, Luca was about to press the button for the first floor when Luke said, "Do you want the other people to see you stepping out of the CEO's

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Luke looked at Luca, who was deep in thought. He did not know what she was thinking.

Ding! The elevator arrived at the basement parking lot.

Luca came to her senses. She wanted to refuse Luke's offer, but Luke had already walked away. She had no other choice but to walk behind him.

She could not treat Luke like how she treated other men. Those tricks did not work on Luke.

Luca eventually caught up to Luke, and they walked to Luke's car together. She was about to open one of the doors at the back and sit inside when Luke said, "I'm not your driver. Come and sit next to me."

Luke had interrupted her before she could open the door.

She felt a little dejected, but this was not the time for her to hesitate. She did not want anyone else to see her, so she lowered her head, went to the side passenger seat, and sat down.

She had just fastened her seatbelt when Luke started the car and drove away.

It was the evening rush hour. If they were unlucky, their car would have to stop every few feet.

She mouthed a silent prayer for smooth traffic.

"Are you feeling nervous?" Luke noticed that she had been deliberately keeping her breathing even. He, Percy, Gale, and Rain knew how to do that.

was a technique they had learned in their physical training to alleviate their minds from too

did not think that Luca would have undergone the same physical training that he did, but she controlled her breathing so naturally. Luke entertained the idea of sparring with her to see how good of a fighter

brought her back to reality. She shook her head and said, "I'm

a detour when he reached the intersection ahead because he knew that the road in front would be congested. "Tommy said that you're a

was taken aback. "I'm a single woman living alone. I learned some self-defense techniques to protect like to see for myself." Luke drove the car into a narrow alley that was only slightly wider than his car. He continued to drive straight as though he was not

turned her head away. Did Luke say that he wanted to

knew that Luke would rather not get physical whenever possible. Why would he want to fight her? Things were not looking good

saw me fight in New York, didn't you? I'm not very good at fighting," Luca said, feeling a little nervous even though she knew that Luke was a skilled

"I think that you're better than that, just like how I think that you're more than meets the

skipped a beat, but she did not express her anxiety on her face. She said, "What do you mean, Mr. Crawford? Do you think that I'm hiding something from you? For example, could I have hidden my true

Luke could tell that she was deliberately twisting the meaning of his words. The impostor Bianca had hidden her true face and managed to deceive **him**.

Could someone have changed his beloved Bianca's face and put her next *to him*?

Luke thought that the idea was laughable. If the real Bianca was indeed by his side, why would she not tell him **so**?

He knew that Bianca loved him. If the scenario he thought had really happened, the only explanation was that Bianca *hated him*.

"Have you?" Luke asked, deciding to go straight to **the point**.

Luca looked straight ahead, and her hands slowly clenched into fists. "I don't think that's any of your concern, Mr. Crawford. My appearance does not affect my **work performance**."

Luke suddenly smiled. "Indeed," he said.

Luca did not know what to feel when she saw Luke's reaction. She realized that she should not have mentioned changing her face, and she began to regret her *choice*.

That must have reminded Luke about the impostor **Bianca**...

The car drove smoothly across the narrow alley, went through two intersections, and arrived at *Tommy's school*.

Luke parked the car at the roadside and unfastened his seatbelt. "I'll go pick Tommy up. Wait in the **car**."

"Alright," Luca nodded and said.

opened the car door and walked toward the front gate of

watched as he walked away. She could sense the man's charm even when his back was

the people walking on the street could not help but turn their heads to look at him. If Luke had become a movie star instead of a CEO, he would be

shook her head and cleared her thoughts. What was she thinking? Why did she fantasize about Luke becoming a

covered her face in embarrassment. Indeed, Luke was beginning to take over her

later, Luke walked down the street while holding Tommy's hand. He opened the car door, and Tommy

when he realized that Luca was in the car. "You're here too, Ms. Luca! I didn't believe it when Daddy told me about

Your Daddy happens to be driving in the same direction." Luca turned her head and smiled gently at the little

and said, "You should let Daddy drive you home every day, Ms. Luca. Cabs can be stinky sometimes. Daddy's car is much

don't mind taking a cab though," Luca said. She noticed that Luke was fastening his seatbelt, so she turned her head around and looked straight to the

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Tommy was too young to tell that Luca was only giving him a non-answer. He clapped his hands happily and said, "Really? Rainie will be happy to hear that!"

Luca felt a little guilty for making Tommy so happy.

'I'm sorry, I didn't mean to keep your hopes up. I want to tell you that I'm your real mother and shower all my love on you, but I'm not strong enough to do that.'

Luke drove to Luca's neighborhood and stopped near the supermarket.

Luca unfastened her seatbelt and said, "You can wait for me in the car, Mr. Crawford. I'll be back soon."

She did not expect that Luke would be coming for dinner, so there was not enough food in the fridge.

Luke nodded.

Tommy wanted to go to the supermarket with Luca, but Luke stopped him from doing so. He could only sit and wait in the car.

In the car, Luke and Tommy stared at each other.

"Daddy, why am I the only one who gets to eat dinner at Ms. Luca's house? Lanie and Rainie want to come too," Tommy said.

Luke looked at his youngest son. He did not know what the other two children were thinking, but he knew that Tommy was willing to visit Luca at her house.

There was a reason why he did not want Lanie and Rainie to get close to Luca.

fewer people knew about his plan, the

Luca's identity, so he wanted to use Tommy as a reason to get close to

Lanie and Rainie came along, his options were restricted if things got

much easier to deal with one child rather than three. Even though he believed that Luca would not harm the child, he still had to take

a picky eater," Luke made up an excuse to appease the

was not satisfied by that answer. "I'm not a picky eater, at least not at Ms.

fell ill because you're a picky eater. Ms. Luca created those recipes specifically to help you become stronger, so they won't be suitable for Lanie and Rainie," Luke

might be young, but he understood what his father told him. He pouted and said, "I didn't expect that being a picky eater can sometimes be a

Luke did not know how to respond

always been a picky eater, and Luke had always been trying to correct his bad habit. He was the pickiest during the period Bianca was

had somehow managed to correct Tommy's bad habit. Luke wondered if Luca's cooking was really that amazing or if she had some sort of

at the supermarket entrance and waited for her to

In the supermarket, Luca thought hard about what she wanted to cook for Luke. She had to cook something other than the planned recipes, but she had no idea what to cook. She pushed the shopping cart around the supermarket and hoped to find some inspiration.

Suddenly, her phone began to ring.

Luca looked at the phone screen and saw that the call was from Sue. She answered the call and said, "Hello, *Sue*."

"**Luca, did** Jason hand you the invitation card?" Sue asked.

"**Mm, he** did, but I can't promise that I'll be free this Sunday," Luca **replied**.

"*No problem*. I'm glad that you've received the card. It's Kari and Teri's birthday this Sunday. If you're free, I hope you can come and celebrate their birthday with them. My two daughters miss you very much," Sue said.

Luca finally understood why Sue gave her a formal invitation card. It was her daughters' birthday party.

She smiled and said, "Alright, I'll try to make it."

"That's good to hear," Sue said. She was very fond of Luca, so she wanted to invite her to Kari and Teri's birthday party.

Luca glanced at the aisles of products and asked, "Right, Sue, what are you cooking for dinner **tonight?**"

"**Spaghetti** with creamed corn and grilled sea bass fillets. Why did you ask me that?" Sue did not know why Luca asked her that question, but she answered it anyway.

and said, "I don't know what to cook for dinner, so I thought I'd gain some inspiration from you. Thanks for the ideas,

I hope to see you on Sunday," Sue

the call ended, Luca picked up some sea bass fillets, a few ears of corn, and a pack of shredded cheese, then went to the

out of the supermarket with a shopping bag in her hand. Before she got near the car, she saw Luke step out and open the

did not say anything. She put the shopping bag in the trunk, then sat down at the side

closed the trunk and returned to the driver's seat. He parked the car at the parking lot near the apartment, and the three people stepped out of the

wanted to go to the trunk to pick up the shopping bag, but Luke was faster than she

"Mind the child," he said.

was taken aback. She nodded, took Tommy's hand, and led him to the

up next to Tommy. The boy lifted his head, looked at the two adults walking next to him, and grinned

thought that they were like a happy family

fact, he welcomed the idea that Luca would be

Chapter 1404

While Luca prepared the dining table, she noticed that Luke was checking Tommy's homework. Instinctively, she took care not to make too much excessive noise.

Tommy was sprawled on Luke's back, looking at his father going through his homework.

Luke found a small mistake on the last page, and he got Tommy to correct it. After Tommy did so, he signed on the last page of the workbook.

He looked up and noticed Luca was looking at them.

He wondered if she had been watching them. The gaze in her eyes was gentle and elegant.

Luca felt the atmosphere become tense when their gazes met. She quickly turned away, placed the dishes on the dining table, cleared her throat, and said, "Dinner is ready."

"You're the best, Ms. Luca! I'm so hungry!" Tommy cheered and clapped his hands excitedly. He stood up and went to wash his hands.

Luca watched the boy enter the bathroom, then turned to look at Luke. Luke was still looking at her.

"Mr. Crawford, would you like to have some soup before dinner?" Luca asked while placing the cutlery.

"Soup sounds good," Luke said as he walked toward the dining table.

"Mm, I'll get you a bowl," Luca hurriedly walked into the kitchen.

narrowed her gaze when he noticed her hasty steps and thought that she was avoiding him. Half a minute later, she came out of the kitchen with a pot of soup. She had already

placed the pot on the dining table, then filled up two bowls of soup for Luke

came out of the bathroom and sat in front of the dining table with a toothy grin on his face. When Luca handed him his bowl, he said, "Thank you, Ms. Luca. I love

smiled and put the other bowl in front of the seat next

his head and saw that Luke was still standing there. He patted the surface of the table and said, "Why are you standing there, Daddy? Come over here and take a seat. Ms. Luca said that you should eat your food while it's

his eyebrows. Tommy seemed to be comfortable in Luca's home after coming over for several consecutive days. He was beginning to treat the place as his own

sat down and ate a spoonful of soup. It was refreshing, light, and indeed very

the bowl of soup, Luke helped himself with the plate of spaghetti that Luca prepared for him. He asked, "Where is your younger

paused for a split second when Luke mentioned Amur. She continued to put a sea bass fillet on Tommy's plate as though nothing happened. "He's traveling now,"

"What does he do?" Luke asked.

put some spaghetti on her plate and explained calmly, "He doesn't have a fixed job yet, but I've heard that he wants to find work at a

"A gym?" Luke's tone became curious. As far as he remembered, Amur had a good physique but did not look like a fitness instructor at *all*.

"*That's what* he wants to do," Luca nodded and said. She placed a sea bass fillet on her plate and began *to eat*.

"I'm willing to help him if he needs it," *Luke said*.

Luca knew that Luke had an extensive social network. If Luke was willing to help Amur, Amur could obtain any job **he wanted**.

However, Amur was not looking for a job at all. She tried to calm herself down and said, "We'll see what happens. He might not remain in A City."

Luke wanted to say something when Tommy tugged his shirt sleeve. He turned around to look at the child.

Tommy pointed at the plate of pork chops on the opposite side of the table. "Daddy, I want that."

Luke put a pork chop on *his plate*.

He shook his head and said, "That's not enough, Daddy. I'm very **hungry today**."

Luke patiently put another pork chop on his plate. Eventually, he did not ask the question he wanted to ask Luca.

After dinner, before the adults could say anything, Tommy rubbed his stomach and said, "Oh, I'm so full. Ms. Luca is an amazing cook as always. Can we go home a little later, Daddy? I want to rest for *a bit*."

smiled as she cleaned

nodded and replied when he saw the smile on

expected that he would agree to the request, so she was not too surprised. After stacking the plates and cutlery, she said, "I've made some cupcakes for Lanie and Rainie. I'll pack them in a box, and you can bring them back, Mr.

Luke was quite surprised that she would do that for the other

the air and said, "No wonder I smelled something sweet baking earlier. I thought my nose was playing tricks on me. Lanie and Rainie would be

while ago, the cook at Crawford Manor baked some cupcakes using Luca's recipe. Rainie thought that they were missing something, and they were not as nice as how Luca

put the plates in the dishwasher, then carefully packed the cupcakes in a

could not stop smiling when she imagined how Rainie's face would light up upon seeing

walked out of the kitchen with the box of cupcakes, she heard the news about the unidentified female corpse on the

was watching the news intently while covering

wanna see!" Tommy tried to pry away Luke's fingers. He did not know what was

Chapter 1405

Luca did not have any children, but she prepared those cupcake boxes...

It was as though she was doing that for Rainie.

Luke did not voice his thoughts. Looking at the clock, he stood up.

Before he said anything, Luca picked up Tommy's backpack.

"Ms. Luca?" Tommy did not understand what Luca was doing. At the same time, Luke also looked at her.

Luca felt a little awkward being stared at like that. She handed the backpack to Luke and cleared her throat. "It's getting late, Mr. Crawford. Tommy needs to go home."

"But I want to watch the cartoon before I go, Ms. Luca," Tommy said as he looked at the clock on the wall. It was only eight o'clock, which was one hour earlier than the usual time.

Luca thought for a while and said, "The cupcakes won't be as nice if you eat them later."

Tommy thought that it made sense. He knew that Lanie and Rainie wanted to taste Luca's cooking again, but only he had the chance to do so. He nodded, took the backpack, and waved his hand reluctantly. "Alright then, we should go."

Luke did not object to it. He picked up the box of cupcakes and the briefcase from the coffee table.

Tommy grabbed his shirt sleeve obediently. Luca noticed that Luke's coat was hanging on the rack, so she went over, picked it up, and handed it to him. "Your coat, Mr. Crawford."

took the coat and nodded.

Their fingers touched when Luca handed the coat to him, and it brought back sweet memories from the past. She could feel a warm current coursing through her

rubbed her fingers and tried hard not to

Tommy stepped out of the apartment, he turned around and waved at Luca. "Goodbye, Ms.

Luca came to her senses and waved

usual, she watched the father and son enter the elevator before closing

was alone in the living room, but the television was on. Tommy's favorite cartoon had started

welled up in Luca's eyes as she listened to the voices in the cartoon. That was Tommy's favorite cartoon since three years ago. Back then, if Luke did not have to work overtime in the office, the family of five would have dinner together, and Luke and she would sit together with Tommy to watch

She missed those times...

picked up the remote control and turned off

It was still early. Luca went into Amur's bedroom and continued the research on *the antidote*.

Even though the police did not divulge too much information, Luca could tell that the impostor was not murdered. Instead, she died because she did not take the antidote in time.

She knew that as much as Luke cared for her, he would not take another person's life so easily. It was the same for Gale and Rain. In their training on the Island of Despair, they would have learned how to torture someone without causing any lasting **damage**.

Creating the antidote was an arduous process. Luca patiently analyzed the components.

Meanwhile, Tommy and Luke left the apartment complex. After they got into the car, he said sternly to his father, "Daddy, can you smile a little **more?**"

"Why?" **Luke** raised his eyebrows as he started the car and drove toward *Crawford Manor*.

"I think that you look too serious. The other kids are afraid of you. Even Ms. Luca is afraid of you. Whenever you're around, the other kids don't dare to approach me, and I don't have any friends," **Tommy complained**.

"You have many friends." Luke was not so easily deceived. Even though he was too busy most of the time to pick up his son from school, he knew very well about Tommy's situation **in school**.

Tommy was outgoing and friendly, and he was beloved by many teachers *and classmates*.

"*You've been asking my teacher about me, haven't you?*" Tommy said and wagged his legs. "Yes, I have a lot of friends at school, but Daddy, haven't you noticed that Ms. Luca is awkward whenever you're around? She would usually fill my dinner plate, but she didn't do that today. Your stern face must have scared her off."

Tommy was capable of taking food for himself, but he preferred to let Luca do it for him. That way, he would feel that he was Luca's favorite child.

sense that Luca's behavior was different today. He realized that it was because of that Luca was intimidated by his father's stern

his chin on his hands and glanced at Luke. He had rarely seen his father smile. Did Luke not know how That was not the case either...

you think that I'm scaring her off?" Luke did not immediately answer Tommy's

been serious and meticulous in front of him. Sometimes, he could tell that her expressions and actions were unnatural, as though she was afraid

should have been a casual affair, but to him, it was more important to find out more about Luca's background. He could not let his guard down, and he behaved how he usually

so moody, Daddy, and Ms. Luca is so kind and gentle. She'd definitely be scared of you," Tommy spoke up for

what you say is true, should I apologize to her?" Luke continued the conversation while

without thinking too much about it. "It'd be great if you could apologize to her, but I've never seen you apologize to

Chapter 1406

"Great-Grandpa! I'm back!" Tommy greeted the old man first and skipped up next to him.

Old Master Crawford smiled at his great-grandson.

He was not happy that Luke had arranged for Tommy to go to Luca's house to have dinner every night. After all, they had a competent cook at home, and he did not understand why Tommy needed to have dinner at an unrelated woman's house.

Moreover, that woman used to be Luke's rumored mistress...

He was impressed with Luca's work capabilities, but he was not happy with Luke's arrangement. It felt as though Luke was trying to get close to her.

Old Master Crawford looked at the grin on Tommy's face. Every time Tommy came back from Luca's house, he would always be so happy.

Other people might even think that Luca was Tommy's mother.

"How was dinner today?" Even though Old Master Crawford was not happy about the situation, he cared for Tommy's well-being.

Tommy grinned and nodded. "Ms. Luca cooked so many amazing dishes today. I'm so full!"

"Ms. Luca? She should be Mdm. Craw for you," Old Master Crawford corrected him.

Tommy scratched his head. "But Ms. Luca isn't married yet. Why do I have to call her 'Madam?'"

Old Master Crawford was taken aback. He did not know how to answer that question.

the box of cupcakes to Tommy and said, "Tommy, you can go upstairs and give this to Lanie

Daddy." Tommy took the box and ran up the

child went upstairs, Old Master Crawford picked up his teacup, glanced at Luke, and pointed at the seat next to him. "Come over here and sit down, Luke. I have something to

tell that his grandfather had been waiting for him in the living room. He nodded and sat down on

asked, "Would you like some tea,

Luke nodded. His demeanor was similar to that of his

poured a cup of tea and carefully placed it in front

call you when I need you," Old Master

The butler nodded and went away.

a sip of the tea. He was not thirsty because he had drunk some water at Luca's apartment. He put the teacup away and asked, "What do you want to ask

seen the news yesterday, right?" Old Master Crawford asked after taking a sip

his gaze. He nodded and said, "I

"*What* do you think about it? Or do you have something to tell me?" Old Master Crawford said.

Luke looked at the calm expression on his grandfather's face. He stood up and said, "Grandfather, are you sure you want to talk about it here?"

Old Master Crawford's expression instantly became grim. He stood up and said, "Let's go to *the study*."

Luke went up to support him, and they went to the study.

"*Close* the door, Luke," Old Master Crawford said. From what Luke said earlier, Old Master Crawford knew that the matter was *serious*.

Luke closed the door. Then, they sat opposite each other on the couch as though they were in a *negotiation*.

Old Master Crawford did not beat around the bush. He said, "Tell me honestly, Luke, is Bianca never coming back?"

"No," Luke said determinedly and shook his head. "Bea will come *back*."

"**So you're** telling me that the unidentified female corpse has nothing to do with Bianca?" Old Master Crawford asked. He had access to the police investigation files, and he knew that there were no similarities between the female corpse and Bianca.

He could not say for sure that the corpse was *Bianca*.

"**It's related**, but that woman is not Bianca. She is a woman who wears Bianca's face, possibly through plastic surgery," **Luke said**.

Master Crawford was shocked. "She's an

"Mm," Luke nodded and replied.

"How did you find out?"

him about how Lanie and Rainie had taken the impostor's hair to conduct a DNA test without the adults'

Master Crawford was silent for a full minute after he

should have told me earlier. I know some people, and I can help you deal with it," he said. Even though he was old, he was willing to pull some strings to help

didn't kill her," Luke said. He knew what his grandfather

Master Crawford frowned. "So how did

take the antidote in time," Luke said coldly, as though the person who died was no more important than an

Master Crawford nodded solemnly and looked at his grandson. Over the past three years, Luke had expended a lot of effort in finding Bianca and restoring her memories. It was shocking to find out that the woman was not the

worried that Luke might be in denial, but he was relieved to see that Luke

sure that you've handled the incident well?" Old Master Crawford asked out of concern. Now that he knew that the woman was from the Island of Despair, he no longer had any sympathy for

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Old Master Crawford nodded, satisfied with how Luke handled the matter.

He knew that Luke was loyal to the real Bianca. Now that Luke found out that the woman was an impostor, he would be looking for the real Bianca once more.

It would be very difficult to succeed in that task, now that three years had passed.

Moreover, no one knew where the base of operations of the Island of Despair was. That added to the difficulty of the task.

"Luke, there are some things that I believe you know without me spelling it out. If you can't Bianca anymore, I hope that you can find your happiness elsewhere. Some things just can't be forced. Do you understand what I mean?" Old Master Crawford said.

Naturally, Luke understood. "I won't give up on finding Bea, Grandfather."

Old Master Crawford sighed. He did not know why his grandson was so loyal and determined.

If only Luke's father were also like that. That would have prevented a lot of family drama.

Even though Allison was already put in prison, the problems she caused still plagued the Crawford family, and that had troubled Old Master Crawford greatly.

The old man wanted to sip some tea to soothe his feelings, but he realized that he left his teacup in the living room.

the palms of his hands and said, "It's been three years. Three years is enough to completely change someone's personality, and it's also enough to change someone's appearance. Luke, I'm saying what if, and it's a very big if, Bianca isn't around anymore? Are you going to continue to wait for her while the children need a mother? Lanie and Rainie know that their mother was an impostor, but what about Tommy? Even though he's not very close to the impostor, you can't keep on deceiving him. He's still a child who needs

was silent as he listened to his

Crawford had made his intentions very clear. The rest was up to Luke to connect the

up with the help of the walking stick and said, "A mother plays an important role in a child's development. Lanie and Rainie didn't have a mother for the first five years of their lives, and they're used to it by now. Tommy is different. Bianca has pampered him since he was a baby. If Bianca isn't coming back anymore, I hope that you can find a good woman so that Tommy can grow

walked toward the door. When he put his hand on the doorknob, he turned around and said, "I don't think you know about this, Luke. The Crawfords might be influential, and people respect us wherever we go, but when Lanie and Rainie were young, they've been bullied by their friends because they don't have a

Luke frowned. "When was that?"

no idea that it

they were in kindergarten. You were very busy, and the kids didn't tell you, but they were crying and complaining to me. They asked me where their mother was, and I didn't know how to answer." Old Master Crawford sighed deeply and continued, "They're good kids, and they're sensible enough not to trouble you or throw tantrums, but they're kids after

imagine how easily kids can learn and adapt. It's a good thing that Tommy isn't close to the impostor. You can tell him the truth, and I'm sure that he'll understand," Old Master Crawford said. If no one knew when the real Bianca was going to return, there was no need to keep hiding the truth from

To maintain a lie, one would need to tell ten more lies. The impostor Bianca was dead, and the real Bianca was not yet found. If Tommy asked where his mother was, it was not good to keep on lying to him.

Luke thought that his grandfather made sense. He would put that under **serious consideration**.

"I'll think about it, Grandfather," he said.

Old Master Crawford nodded, then left the room.

Luke also stood up and left the room. He went to the common area on the second floor, but the children were no longer there. He opened up the children's room and realized that Lanie and Rainie were in the same room, eating the cupcakes that Luca had baked for them.

"Daddy!" The twins smiled and nodded *at him*.

Luke nodded. "Where's Tommy?" He asked.

"Tommy is taking a shower in his room," Rainie answered. She was very happy that she got to eat **those cupcakes**.

Luke nodded and told them, "You should brush your teeth and go to bed after you finish those cupcakes. Don't stay up too *late*."

"Yes, Daddy," the twins replied in one **voice**.

leaving their room and closing the door, Luke went to Tommy's bedroom. Upon opening the door, he heard the sounds of running water coming from the bathroom. He sat down on the chair next to the study table and waited for Tommy to come out from the

Crawford's words had changed his mind. He decided that he should not hide the truth from Tommy to tell him that the real Bianca had not been found, and the impostor Bianca

Tommy finished his shower, he came out of the bathroom and saw Luke. He grinned and greeted him, saw that Tommy's hair was still wet. He patted his thigh and said, "Why did you come out of the bathroom before you dry your hair? Come here and let me dry it

nodded, went over, and sat on Luke's

a towel and carefully dried Tommy's soft and fine hair. Soon, all the water droplets were

put the towel away and carried the child into the bathroom. Taking the hairdryer, he blew dry the

his hair was dry, Tommy looked up at his father's reflection in the mirror. "Are you free tonight? I thought you'd be doing your work in the study by now,"

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Tommy understood what Luke meant when he said that she was not their mother. Tears welled up in his eyes as he jumped out of bed and walked to Luke's side. He held Luke's hand and asked, "Daddy, that's not our Mommy. Is Mommy in the hands of the bad guys?"

"Perhaps." Luke did not provide him with 100 percent certainty.

He would give his all to look for Bianca. However, he could not promise the kids whether he could find her and how long it would take.

"Daddy, I'm sure you'll find Mommy." Tommy held Luke's hand tightly with his tiny hands as though he was comforting Luke.

"Do you miss her?" Luke tried his best to hold back the tears in the corners of his eyes when he saw how sensible Tommy was being. He knew that Tommy did not want him to worry.

Tommy was the youngest in the family. He loved to fool around but when he showed his sensible side, he was no different from Lanie and Rainie.

"Yes, I miss her but Mommy has been gone for so many years. Tommy knows better than to make you promise that you'll find her," Tommy said.

Luke sighed and held his hand when he saw how well-behaved Tommy was. "I'll find her as soon as possible."

Tommy nodded and thought of Lanie and Rainie. He lowered his voice and said, "Dad, don't tell Lanie and Rainie about this. If they know that Mommy isn't back yet, they'll be very sad. I don't want to see them upset."

Luke stared at him. Compared to Tommy, Lanie and Rainie only met Bianca when they were five years old. They did not have as many childhood memories of Bianca as compared to Tommy. Even so, after Tommy found out about the news, he did not make a fuss but instead comforted Luke and requested that Lanie and Rainie be kept in the dark.

He did not want them to be sad...

"Daddy, what's the matter with you?" Tommy noticed that Luke was keeping quiet. He was worried that he would tell the news to Lanie and Rainie, so he said, "I want Lanie and Rainie to be happy."

bedroom door opened, and Lanie and Rainie walked in. They looked at their brother and father, then walked up to them

"Lanie, Rainie..." Tommy looked at them.

her brother's cheek and said, "We all know, Tommy. Don't

relieved when he found out that they both knew about it. He was glad that there was no need for him to hide it

at Luke and said firmly, "I believe that Daddy will bring

looked at the three children, nodded, and touched their heads with his big palms. He said, "It's getting late. Go get some rest. All of you have

he finished speaking, Lanie and Rainie left, while Tommy climbed into

Luke tucked Tommy in, he turned off the lights. He then walked out of the bedroom and closed the door on his way

was getting late. The entire Crawford Manor fell into silence. Luke watched the dim lights in the corridor and thought about the

to bed, Bianca would always open the door of the kids' bedrooms to see if they had fallen asleep. If she saw that they had yet to sleep, she would whisper and comfort them until

fake Bianca joined their family, she had not once comforted the children. The kids only managed to fall asleep because of the routines that Bianca helped them build in the past. They no longer needed anyone to coax them

*The children were growing up. They were so sensible that it **was distressing**.*

Since Old Master Crawford knew about the fake Bianca, he no longer had to pretend that all was well. He went back to the master bedroom to rest.

*He had not slept in the master bedroom for **three years**.*

In the past three years, to help Bianca gain familiarity with the environment, he went with Tia's suggestion and did not redecorate the master bedroom.

The master bedroom remained the same as before Bianca was *kidnapped*.

Luke did not lie on the bed. He would not lie on a bed slept by a counterfeit, so he took a new set of bedding and pillows from the cabinet. He lay down on the **sofa instead**.

With one hand resting behind his head, Luke looked at the ceiling, missing Bianca even **more**.

...

The next day.

Luca returned to work at T **Corporation**.

She did not rest all night last night, so there were two dark eye circles around her eyes.

she was clocking in, Luca happened to run into Zoey Davis, the

her eye bags, Zoey asked, "Dr. Craw, did you not sleep well

insomnia," Luca said. She used to take medicine the instant she could not sleep. It was just that she still woke up from a dream in the middle of last night after taking medicine.

She dreamt about Luke again.

noticed how exhausted she looked and asked, "Dr. Craw, would you like a cup

please send it to the laboratory later," Luca said. She planned to go directly to the laboratory for some research after putting her briefcase in

could, she did not want to stay in the office as she knew that a surveillance camera was installed. Zoey finished pressing her thumb against the device for verification, walked directly to the elevator, returned to the office, put her briefcase and phone in the safe, put on the lab coat, and when she arrived at the laboratory, she saw several researchers sitting together. Zoey shook her head. If it was when they used to work at Watson Biopharmaceuticals, they would bury themselves in their research. Since they came to T Corporation, they seemed to chat more and had more opportunities to

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Luca's expression turned dull for two seconds when she heard their reply.

She did not expect that they would also be going on the employee trip...

"In that case, when is it?" Luca asked. She was not too keen on going when she thought of how she had to travel with all the other employees.

It was not because of Luke. She simply did not want to join in the excitement. Jason would rarely make an appearance in company events as such, let alone Luke.

It was usually led by managers of other departments.

"It hasn't been decided yet. I heard that they'll decide on the location first, and then the time," a researcher said.

Luca nodded, walked to her seat, and sat down. Since they were so interested in the employee trip, she was happy to let them discuss it. She started with her research.

Zoey walked in with a cup of coffee and saw several researchers gathered together. After she heard about what they were discussing, she smiled and did not say anything.

She placed the coffee on Luca's seat and said, "Dr. Craw, your coffee."

"Thank you," Luca was a little sleepy. She picked up the coffee, swayed it a little, and took a sip.

of the researchers saw Zoey, he asked curiously, "Miss Zoey, where do you think we should vote and said, "Just vote according to your

to go to every place, so we want to get your opinion. After all, you've been working in T Corporation for so many years. We want a rough idea of where other people are voting for," the researcher said with a smile. The budget for T Corporation's employee trips was huge and the places chosen were places where employees usually did not have the financial means to

what they said, thought about it, and replied, "I think Villa Almira of B City may have

heard B City being mentioned, Luca put down the coffee cup and asked, "Why B

to be carrying out a mission there. Although B City was large and it was unlikely they would bump into each other during the employee trip, her heart still felt

visited the other places in past employee trips. Although the scenic spots are different, they're essentially still the same locations. B City is a newly added location this year. The scenery and facilities of Villa Almira are great. It's close to neighboring countries too, so my guess is that everyone will choose to go there,"

to her analysis, Luca asked, "Why did the company add B City as one of the travel options this year? I'm just curious. After all, with so many going on the trip, I doubt we'd travel via plane? If we take the high-speed rail, it'll take almost a day

all of the employees of T Corporation went on the trip to B City, the cost of the high-speed rail tickets alone would

of the company's welfare. As for why the boss is so generous, you have to ask him about this," Zoey said with

When several researchers heard her reply, they all said, "Sounds good! Shall we all vote for B City, then?"

"Yeah!"

"**Let's** do it." Several of them agreed.

"**If you're** done with voting, let's start with the research." Luca reminded them, then turned around and walked to the cultivation room.

"Got it!" the researchers replied.

Seeing their ecstatic reaction, Zoey said, "I won't bother you with your research. If you need anything, just use the office phone to reach the assistant's **office.**"

"Okay, thank you, Ms. Zoey." Rhett was the first *to respond*.

Zoey returned to the assistant's office and reported to Jason about Luca's reaction when she learned that the employee trip would likely be to B City.

After Jason learned about it, he reported the incident to Luke.

Long before this, Luke already got to know that Luca's younger brother, Amur, was on a business trip in B City. He wanted to take the opportunity to test whether Luca was from the Island of Despair, so he arranged for such a trip through the employee trip.

had been saying that Amur was her younger brother after her mother remarried. However, Luke was on guard as Amur was of pure Russian descent, and the former Island of Despair was in

keep an eye on the voting and have them choose B City,"

and sighed silently in his heart. His boss was willing to go all out to test Luca. The cost of having all the employees take the high-speed rail was

running experiments all morning, Luca finally cultivated several types of bacteria by the time she got to her lunch break. Her next step was to cultivate these bacteria to test the efficacy of

walked out of the cultivation room, many researchers had already left the laboratory for
saw her leave, he stood up and asked, "Dr. Craw, I'm going downstairs to buy lunch. Should I bring you
thought about it for a while. She felt a little tired so she nodded and said, "Okay, please bring
did not have a cafeteria for its employees, so the employees either brought their own meals or they
do you feel like having?" Rhett
with anything. Just get a takeaway of whatever you're having. By the way, please send it to the door of
my office and don't knock." Luca wanted to make use of lunchtime to catch up on sleep. She would eat
when she

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Rhett replied, "I plan to pick a random restaurant and go for a set meal. Do you have any
recommendations?"

"I know a restaurant nearby that serves great food. Shall we?" Zoey invited him for lunch.

Rhett nodded and agreed to her invitation.

The two arrived at a nearby restaurant. While eating, Zoey kept asking Rhett about Luca, covering her
hobbies and everything else in between.

Rhett did not think too much of it. He thought that she was just curious about the preferences of his
boss to ease her work in the future, so he told her everything he knew.

Zoey made mental notes.

On the other side, Luca went back to her office and sat on the chair. She was able to remain calm even
when she knew that there was a camera behind her. Sleepiness struck her. She stretched and sat on the
sofa.

She picked up the phone, set an alarm so that she would not oversleep, and then lay down with her
head facing the camera.

Luca knew that Luke installed the security camera to see if she acted abnormally and had no other
intentions.

As such, she felt comfortable resting in her office.

After Luca lay down, she put on her lab gown because she was worried about catching a cold.

Luke sat in the office watching her actions, his gaze gradually darkening.

on his door so he minimized the window. He said, "Come

he heard Luke's voice, Jason walked in with a take-out box. "Mr. Crawford, your lunch is
glanced at the time. It was 12:15 and lunchtime had

was skipping lunch and sleeping in her office instead. 'Is she tired?' Luke's index finger tapped his desk as he thought about

Luke's lunch on the side. He noticed his actions and knew that his boss was deep in thought. He did not dare to make any noises and turned around

on the window when the door

lay flat on the sofa as though she was asleep. She did

suddenly thought of Bianca. Bianca did not like to lie on her back. She always lay on her side, which was completely different from what Luca was

taken back when he thought of that. He did not understand why he thought about Bianca when he looked

had dreamed of Bianca more than once, and her face would gradually turn into

was a little stunned. He minimized the window and picked up the take-out box on the side. After he opened it, the aroma of the food wafted in the air. He looked at the mouth-watering food but unconsciously thought of the woman who had fallen asleep in

'I assume she didn't have anything to eat before she *fell asleep...*'

Luke put the take-out box aside and was just about to click on the surveillance footage again when there was another knock on the **door**.

He said calmly, "Come in."

Jason opened the door and walked in. He saw that Luke had not eaten yet so he said, "Boss, the New York branch has something important to ask you and requested for a meeting. Are you free *now*?"

"**Yes, go** for it." Luke looked at his computer screen. The mouse happened to hover over the window but it was **still minimized**.

He held the mouse, moved to the video call application, and clicked on it. He entered the account details and password to log in to prepare for the international **conference**.

Upon seeing this, Jason closed the door and returned to his office to prepare the agenda for the **meeting**.

The agenda for the meeting was slightly boring. The supposed important meeting was just some trivial matters of Party A. The executives had a disagreement, so they were trying to share their ideas with Luke to get his *buy-in*.

Luke listened to them go on and on about their proposal. The two sides opposed each other's plans and almost got into a quarrel.

The proposal involved their interests, so they were particularly on edge.

Jason listened to their constant arguing and felt like he was suffocating. He wondered if he should calm them down but he was just an assistant, so he sent a private message to Luke to ask for **his opinion**.

with two words. [No

Jason received the text, he stopped talking. Since his boss did not say anything, it was not his place to chime in. Hence, he waited for the result of

to their conversation while silently flipping through and reviewing some

was not until two hours later that they realized it was midnight in New York but the executives had yet come to a

looked at Luke again. Luke was sitting there, looking through

of the branch office realized that they had been arguing for two hours and wiped away his sweat. He was used to making decisions on this kind of thing but because he did not handle the situation well the last time, both sides refused to accept his proposed solution. As such, they asked Luke to make the

the president of the branch, called out to Luke cautiously, and the two parties

up at the camera, still not making a

we have finished the presentation. Do you have any thoughts?" Yorkson asked. It was just two proposals but they lost track of time and went on for more than two hours. It was a waste of

the file and looked at each of their expressions through

of self-proclaimed elite New Yorkers dared not breathe too loud. They were all waiting for him to make