

## Be Gentle 1421

### Chapter 1421

Luca read the comments on the statement. Most of the commenters said that they did not believe it.

Even though both parties had already issued their statements, they still believed that something was going on between Luke and Tia, and the statements did not reflect the full picture.

A public figure like Luke Crawford would definitely attract a lot of attention, especially when he was rumored to have done something that defied social norms. Naturally, the people did not wish for the incident to end just like that.

It seemed that the scandal would continue to brew for some time.

The commenters either said that Tia was shameless to seduce a married man, or they stood on Tia's side and said that she was a good match for Luke. Luca put her phone away and sighed.

She did not know why she sighed. She could not clear her thoughts.

...

The next day, Luca stayed in bed. When she woke up and looked at the clock, it was already noon.

She had a long and turbulent dream about Luke and Tia. Even though the dream troubled her, she managed to get some sleep, and she felt a lot better after waking up.

got out of bed and made some lunch for herself. After eating, she cleaned herself and went to

had miscarried, and her body was still weak. Luca planned to visit

she arrived at the hospital, she did not know which room Talia was in. She had to ask for that information at the

nurse became noticeably wary after hearing that Luca wanted to visit Talia. She asked, "Are you a family member of

her superior at work. I'm here to visit her because I've heard that she was ill,"

really her superior at work? I haven't seen you before," the nurse said doubtfully, continuing to withhold information about Talia's room from

Saturday, isn't it? I've been busy at work for the past few days. I've finally managed to make time to visit her. I'm really her superior at work. See, I brought her gifts too," Luca

thought that Luca did not look like a bad person. "She's at Room 1421," she

Luca nodded, though she asked curiously, "Excuse me, Miss, may I ask you *a question?*"

"What is it?"

"Why did you look so wary when I mentioned Talia Sullivan's name? Did something happen over the past few days?" Luca asked.

**The** nurse sighed and said, "I shouldn't be telling anyone else about the patient's personal matters, but if you said that you're her superior at work, then you should know what happened. The father of the miscarried child is her manager in the office. It's not uncommon for a woman with a weak constitution to miscarry, but the father of the child is already married to another woman. When the father's legally married wife knew about it, she hired people to cause trouble here every day. They have seriously affected the doctors and nurses at the hospital, not to mention it's causing a lot of distress to the patient. Two days ago, those troublemakers even roughed up another pregnant woman and caused her to go into labor prematurely. In any case, we can't discharge Ms. Sullivan because she has a weak constitution. We moved her to another room yesterday, and the director ordered us not to give out her new room number so *easily*."

Luca nodded. "Don't worry. I'm not here to cause trouble."

"*You don't* look like a troublemaker. However, the patient has been depressed for the past few days. If she listens to you, you should tell her to leave that man. She's still young, and she'll be able to bear children again," the nurse *said*.

**Luca** smiled, nodded, and went toward the elevator.

In front of Room 1421, she knocked on the door and went *inside*.

There was only a single patient in the room. When Luca went inside, a middle-aged woman stood up and asked Luca, "Who are you?"

Luca Craw, Talia's colleague," Luca said as she looked at Talia on

was taken aback when she saw Luca. "Why did you come here,

heard that you're hospitalized, so I'm here to visit you. I've been busy with my research for the past two days, and I only managed to find some time today because it's the weekend," Luca said and put the bag of health supplements on the table. "You need more nutrition now. Here, all these are for

woman looked at the bag of supplements on the table and realized that Luca was not one of the troublemakers that harassed them for the past two days. She let her guard down and said eagerly, "You shouldn't have, Ms. Craw. We can't accept

supplements are suitable for Talia's current condition, and I think she should take them. Are you Talia's mother?" Luca

am." Even though Talia's mother was a housewife, she could tell that Luca was more than a colleague when she heard Talia call her "Dr.

had come to visit Talia ever since she was hospitalized, but they all came in and cursed at Talia. Some of them even tried to drag her out of bed, which caused her to lose a lot

then, every visitor came to accuse Talia of being a seductress. None of them cared for her condition, including the child's father, who had deliberately avoided her after bringing her to the

## **Chapter 1422**

Luca's expression remained impassive as Mrs. Sullivan continued to beg her.

Talia and her mother exchanged glances. Even though she felt guilty for asking Luca for help, she realized that she really needed Luca's help to get her out of that mess.

She tried to evoke Luca's pity. "You don't have to say that, Mom. It's all my fault. I'm the silly one."

Streams of tears gushed from Mrs. Sullivan's eyes. She had suffered multiple shocks over the past two days. When those hooligans came to threaten Talia's life, Cole did not show up at all.

She resented her daughter for sleeping with that man.

Mrs. Sullivan wiped her tears away and sobbed. "I can't blame you, Talia. That man must have tricked you to get in bed with him, but now... now... how heartless can he be? Tell me, Ms. Craw, does that man deserve to be a department manager?"

Luca did not think that Cole was qualified to be a department manager, but she had no say in the hiring process.

"You're complaining to the wrong person, Mrs. Sullivan. It's Mr. Crawford's decision." Luca realized that Talia and her mother wanted her to help them get back at Cole.

They thought that they could rely on someone of the same rank as Cole in the department so that Cole's position would be in peril.

had told her mother that Cole was the one who

could not stop Talia from telling lies, but she thought that she was lucky for not accepting Talia as her research assistant. Since that incident, Luca had realized that Talia was someone who would not hesitate to lie to gain whatever she wanted. What she heard earlier proved her right once

nodded hurriedly. "Yes, yes, of course, the decision is in the big boss's hands, but you're also a department manager, aren't you? The big boss will definitely consider your opinion. Ms. Craw, my Talia has always been a good girl. She works hard to make money for the family because she knows that I'm could not tell if Mrs. Sullivan did not know Talia's true personality or if she was also complicit in Talia's had no sympathy for

looked at the mother and daughter and smiled. The two people did not know what she was

gaze had never looked away from Luca. She wondered what the smile

Craw..." She said with the most pitiful voice she could muster. Luca was probably the only person who could

other researchers in the Technical Department were all Cole's friends. She even knew that Cole and the others would go to the nightclub

**Talia** never hoped that those people would betray Cole and help her. She hoped that Luca would take pity on her because Luca was also a woman who might empathize with **her**.

*Even though* Talia did not finish her sentence, Luca could guess what she wanted to say. "I'd like to talk to you in private," she said.

Talia was taken aback, and she felt vaguely uneasy. However, she considered that Luca might be convinced to help her. She turned to her mother and said, "Mom, why don't you get yourself some lunch downstairs?"

Mrs. Sullivan nodded, thinking that Luca was not going to harm her daughter. She put on sunglasses and a cap, took an empty lunch box, and left the room.

**After her** mother left the room, Talia immediately burst into *tears*.

Luca stood in front of her, and she could tell that those tears were genuine. She slowly handed her a paper napkin.

"*Thanks.*" Talia took it and wiped her **tears**.

She felt very sad thinking about her experiences in the past few days. She did not realize she was pregnant until she lost her child, and she was not sure if she would be able to keep **her job...**

only say helplessly, "I can't talk to you if you keep

to stop her tears. She could not change what happened, but she would try her best to avoid a bad  
a chair over and sat opposite

could see that Luca's expression remained impassive as ever. In fact, her expression seemed harsher

felt extremely uneasy, and she hoped that she was mistaken about Luca's thoughts. "Dr. Crawford, can you help me?" She said

do you want me to help you?" Luca asked. There was no emotion in

was slightly excited when she heard that. If Luca was willing to ask her that, she might also be willing to  
an innocent victim in this incident. If you can help me, I promise to expose everything I know about Dr.  
Kidman, including the things he had done that actively harmed the company!" Talia said. She only  
wanted to save her

if you do that, you know that you'll end up the same as Dr. Kidman, right? If you already know what he  
did, but you only choose to expose it now because you don't want to get in trouble, what do you think  
Mr. Crawford would think?" Luca said with

### **Chapter 1423**

Talia's despair grew as Luca said those words.

She only felt regret as she looked at Luca's frigid expression. She regretted what she did just so that she  
could placate her envy and satisfy Cole's ambition.

"I can explain, Dr. Crawford," Talia still tried to get on Luca's good side.

Luca took a step back and stared at Talia coldly. "There's no need for explanation, Talia."

Talia opened her mouth but said nothing. Seeing that Luca had no intention of helping her, her despair  
slowly turned into resentment.

"No matter what your decision might be, you're not going to get out of this scot-free. In any case, it's better to own up before the other people find out what you did. Your body is weak now, and you need nutrition. I can only wish you good luck in your future." After Luca said that, she turned around and left the room.

In the corridor, she met Mrs. Sullivan, who had returned from the cafeteria with some food.

"Are you leaving already, Ms. Craw?" Mrs. Sullivan said eagerly, thinking that she was her daughter's savior.

After all, Luca was the only person who visited Talia without causing trouble. Moreover, she had brought gifts.

Luca nodded and said, "Yes."

Mrs. Sullivan did not know what happened in the room. She tried to ask Luca to stay. "Why are you going away so soon? I've bought some extra food for you. I hope that you can stay and have a meal with us. Talia has been through a lot in the past few days, and we're glad that you're here for us."

that Mrs. Sullivan would not treat her like that if she found out what Luca said to Talia in

I have somewhere else to go," Luca said and went toward the

tried to ask her again to stay so that Luca would have a good impression of them, but when she turned her head to look toward the elevator lobby, she saw several people walking in her direction. She quickly turned around, covered her face, and briskly walked back into

hastily going into the room and shutting the door, she tried to look outside through

Mom?" Talia was nervous when she saw her mother's behavior. She forgot to wipe away the tears in her

quiet. I saw those people outside," Mrs. Sullivan said while putting a finger in front of her lips. She rushed to the window and drew the

was immediately nervous. "They didn't see you, right?"

no. I'm smart enough to evade their attention," Mrs. Sullivan shook her head and said. She put the lunch boxes on the bedside cabinet and noticed that Talia's eyes were bloodshot. "What happened? Did you cry again? The doctor said that you have to control your emotions. If you cry too much, that'll affect

dared not bawl out loud, so she could only let out stifled sobs while tears continued

handed her a lunch box and asked her, "How was the talk with Ms. Craw

Luca's name was mentioned, Talia clenched her

Mrs. Sullivan noticed the change in her daughter's expression. She asked her, "What happened? Did you accidentally offend **her**?"

Talia gritted her teeth. "She's not a good person, Mom. She never wanted to help me in the first place, and she's only here to laugh at me. I've already admitted my fault, but she doesn't want to help me. I don't think anyone else can help **me**."

"**How** is that possible? Didn't she say that she'll help you? Did you say something wrong?" Mrs. Sullivan could not believe it.

Talia did not want her mother to think that Luca was a good person. She growled, "Don't be so naïve, Mom. She's sleeping with the big boss, and she's not going to help me. She even thinks that I'm standing in her way. She doesn't believe that Cole Kidman had planned **everything.**"

Mrs. Sullivan stood there, stunned. She did not know what Talia had done at *Watson*.

"*What... what should we do now? We can't stay here...*" She was *totally clueless*.

**Talia's** resentment only grew as she watched her mother running in circles like a headless chicken.

*Did Luca get away with it because she had been sleeping with Mr. Crawford? No one blamed Luca for anything, while **she...***

"I'm not going to let Cole Kidman get away with this, even if it means that I have to die!" Talia said agitatedly as she made a call on her phone to Jason.

*She wanted* Cole to suffer with her. As for Luca, she would not forgive *her either*.

...

left the hospital, she remembered about Jason's

be Kari and Teri's birthday party tomorrow. Before she was abducted, the two girls were only toddlers learning to speak. Now, they were already kind and considerate

for a while and decided that she should attend the

thought in mind, she went to a toy store near the hospital. The store had a wide array of toys because the hospital had a pediatrics ward, and Luca was spoiled

clerk recommended some present choices, and Luca decided on two dollhouses in different styles and a set of storybooks suitable for

Luca arrived at her apartment with the two big present boxes, she received a call

told her that the investigation of the incident at her laboratory

masterminds behind the sabotage were Cole Kidman and Talia Sullivan. Talia had called Jason and owned up to what she did. She also exposed many of

the rest to you and Mr. Crawford then," Luca said and ended

knew that Jason and his subordinates were very efficient at their job. They had already found the culprit but kept it under wraps because Talia was in the hospital, and they did not want to exacerbate

impartial, but he

## **Chapter 1424**

Luca skimmed through the news articles. Some of them were criticizing Tia, while others did a thorough analysis of the two people.

There were many reports, and all of them contributed to the popularity of the scandal.

Luca smiled bitterly and shook her head.

...

The next morning, shortly after Luca woke up, she received a message from Sue, asking if she would attend the birthday party today.

Luca sent Sue her reply and began to freshen up.

It was a children's birthday party, so there was no need to be too formal. Luca changed into a plain-colored long dress, wore a pair of flats, picked up the presents, and left the apartment.

When she arrived at Jason's mansion, she rang the doorbell.

The young caretaker jogged over and opened the door. She was wearing a headband with the words "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" on it.

"Welcome, Dr. Craw," the caretaker said with a smile. She addressed Luca like how Jason did.

"Yes. That's a cute headband," Luca said as she walked through the gate with the presents.

Luca touched the headband and said, "Ms. Carter prepared this for us. Kari and Teri like the headbands. Oh, Dr. Craw, you brought them presents

I can't possibly come to a birthday party empty-handed," Luca

Teri will be ecstatic!" The caretaker said as she and Luca entered the

Luca," Sue said when she saw Luca. She put away the balloons in her

you need my help?" Luca said and nodded. She could tell that Sue and Jason loved their daughters very

thought of her daughter Nyla. It was almost Nyla's birthday, but she had never organized a birthday party

was not there for Lanie and Rainie when they were young, but she knew that Luke had never

Nyla, on the other hand...

decorations are done. Jason hired some people to do all this. They're providing the catering as well, so that saves us a lot of trouble," Sue said with a grin. She was in an excellent mood because it was her

came to her senses and nodded. She handed the boxes in her hands to Sue. "Here are the presents for Kari and

It was normal to give presents at a birthday party, so Sue did not say anything. She accepted the presents happily and got the caretaker to take them *upstairs*.

"Where are the girls?" Luca asked.

"**They're** still styling up upstairs. Jason wanted them to be at their best today, so he hired two stylists for them. He wanted the girls to look like princesses in a fairy tale, and I can't do that for them," Sue explained. Then, she continued, "Make yourself at home, Luca. We didn't invite too many people today, and we'll start the party when everyone's here."

*They invited* some of Kari and Teri's best friends at school as well as some of Jason's friends.

*Luca* nodded. She sat on the couch and waited for the party *to start*.

**After all**, she was only an invited guest. All she had to do was not cause the hosts any trouble.

**The** guests arrived one after another. Most of them were adults who brought their children, and Luca was the only one who came by herself. However, the adults left after sending their children there, so Luca and the young caretaker were the only adults in the living room.

The children were well-behaved, and the caretaker could handle all of them herself.

Luca smiled gently as she watched several children playing together. Even after the three-year ordeal in the Island of Despair had made her bitter, she still loved **children**.

*Children were* pure and innocent, and their smiles healed Luca's **cold heart**.

girl ran up to Luca and smiled at her. "You're so pretty, Ma'am. Have some

warmed as she looked at the piece of chocolate wrapped up in pink

her head gently and said, "Thank you, but I don't eat sweets. You should eat

Mommy says that I should share nice things, and I think that a pretty lady like you deserves something nice!" The little girl said and placed the piece of chocolate on

the warmth of the little girl on the piece of chocolate. She remembered that Nyla's favorite candy

was rare on the Island of Despair. Whenever Amur came back from his missions, he would bring some for her and

Ma'am. I didn't mean to make you sad," the little girl said when she noticed that Luca's eyes were misting up. She thought that she had been rude

shook her head and said, "I happened to think of a little girl who loves chocolate

should buy some chocolate for her, Ma'am. I'm sure that she'll be happy if you give her chocolate," the little girl said

the piece of chocolate away and patted the little girl's head. "Mm, thank you. I'll buy a lot of delicious chocolate for

little girl ran back to her

## **Chapter 1425**

Bailey did not care if her actions scared the children at the scene. After all, those children were not hers. She looked around and did not see Sue, so she asked, "Where's Sue?"

The caretaker knew who Bailey was. Bailey would come to Jason's mansion and cause a ruckus once in a while.

She did not check the security camera before answering the door because she thought another guest had arrived. She only realized that it was Bailey after she opened the door, but it was too late to close it.

Bailey was stronger than the caretaker, and the caretaker could not close the door. After Bailey pushed the door open, she barged into the house.

The caretaker followed behind her in case she did something rash.

Luca frowned when she saw Bailey's brazen expression. She could tell that Bailey deliberately came to cause trouble during the girls' birthday party.

Bailey also spotted Luca in the living room. From what the hooligans she hired told her, she knew Luca was a good fighter.

Bailey could not fight, so she did not plan to engage Luca. Her only target today was Sue.

Sue had snatched Bailey's man from her. Bailey wanted to raise a ruckus now so that Kari and Teri's friends knew that their mother was a sinner.

Bailey glared at the caretaker. "Get Sue Carter here now!"

The caretaker shuddered and ran up the stairs.

girl who had given Luca candy burst into

walked over, which caused Bailey to take a

was afraid that Luca might punch her. If she had known that Luca was invited to the party, she would have brought a few hooligans

do you want, Luca Craw?" Bailey

at her, hugged the crying girl, then glared at Bailey. "I should ask you the

looking for that b\*tch Sue Carter. It's none of your business," Bailey said, standing with her arms akimbo like

chuckled and said, "What you want to do with Sue is indeed none of my business, but you're scaring all these children, and I can't allow that

she said that, the children huddled up behind her and looked at her

little girl in her arms

Bailey felt only contempt for Luca. If she had brought two hooligans with her, Luca would not be able to protect all the

*While the* two women were caught in a standoff, Luke and Tommy came to the mansion entrance. Luke stopped walking when he heard the commotion inside.

"Daddy?" Tommy looked at him.

*Luke placed* his finger on his lips, then turned to the child and shook his **head**.

*He* could hear Bailey and Luca's voices coming from inside the house. Instead of going through the door, he took Tommy's hand and went to the side garden.

From the side garden, Luke could see the living room behind the floor-to-ceiling window. One of the windows was open, and Luke could hear everything inside clearly.

*Tommy* saw that Luca was carrying a little girl. He said dejectedly, "Daddy, who's that little girl in Ms. Luca's *arms*?"

Luke shook his head. He did not know who she was.

**Tommy** said, "Oh no, don't tell me that's Ms. Luca's daughter! Looks like you have no **hope, Daddy.**"

**Luke had** no response to Tommy's comment. The boy sounded as though he hoped that his father would have some affection toward Luca.

"Say something, Daddy!" Tommy wagged his **father's hand**.

"She's single," Luke said.

relieved to hear that. Ever since he knew that their mother was an impostor, he hoped that Luke would find Luca so that she would be their

did not make any more noise and looked through the window with his

moment, Luca did not know that she was being watched. She remained composed in the face of Bailey's sarcasm. "I have to meddle because I can't allow you to continue causing

Bailey would have started screeching if not for Luca getting physical. She turned her head to look at the children and said, "Hey, kids, are you all friends of the two

children looked at each other. They did not know what she was talking

frowned in disgust. She hated what Bailey was doing because Bailey's words would mislead the children, or worse, taint their

did not have enough hands to cover all

boy asked, "Ma'am, what's a

talking about your friends! The two birthday girls? They're both little b\*tches!" Bailey spat out those words like

when he heard that. He realized that he and his father were snooping, so he whispered, "Daddy, I don't like the way

## **Chapter 1426**

When Sue heard Bailey's derogatory language, she wanted to rush up to her, but Jason grabbed her wrist.

She glared at the man angrily, but her gaze was also full of grievances.

Jason realized that his tolerance toward Bailey had caused Sue and the two girls much suffering. He said, "Let me handle this."

Sue looked at him and nodded.

She would not be so bothered by Bailey's antics if it were any other day, but it was Kari and Teri's birthday party, and Bailey had said such filth in front of the other children.

Jason took her hand, and they walked down the last step of the flight of stairs. Bailey was livid when she saw that.

"I see that you have the guts to come downstairs, Sue Carter!" Bailey wanted to pry their hands apart.

Sue was angry when she heard those words. The house was hers, and she could go wherever she wanted. It did not belong to that woman!

She wanted to step forward, but Jason tried to comfort her. "Sue, you should bring the children upstairs."

"No," Sue said insistently. She could guess that Jason would send that woman away, and that would be the end of it. The woman would not have learned her lesson.

wanted to stay there to see what Jason

for a while and understood what Jason and Sue were thinking. She turned and spoke softly to the children, "Hey, children, why don't we go upstairs? Mr. and Mrs. Doyle have prepared a lot of delicious food and fun games for all of

were convinced by what Luca said. The girl in her arms was the first to reply, "Alright,

put the girl on the floor, and the children excitedly ran up

that the children were gone, the adults

a grateful glance at Luca. Then, he said impatiently to Bailey, "What do

the meaning of this, Jason Doyle? Don't you know that you belong to me?" Bailey felt hurt. She had wanted to win his heart again, but he had always rejected

tell you for the last time: we've already divorced! There's nothing between us now," Jason said sternly. She had agreed to the divorce back then, but now that he was with another woman, she did not stop attacking Sue. It was as though she

people had already agreed to part ways. What was the point of

you mean, there's nothing between us? You're the father of our son! Half of his genes are from you!" Bailey was not going to admit that they were unrelated now. She pointed a finger at Sue. "That woman snatched you away from me, yet you're still protecting her! Are you blind, Jason Doyle? Haven't you seen her true colors after all

Sue was tired of Bailey's repeated accusations that she was the one who broke up Jason's marriage.

**At first**, she had suspected that it was the case. She had even thought of leaving the city with the girls.

Later, Jason showed her concrete evidence that he and Bailey had divorced even before he met Sue. He was single for some time before making out with her.

**Sue was** relieved to find out that she had not destroyed a **marriage...**

Jason stole a glance at Sue. Her expression was *still normal*.

*He took* Sue's wrist and pulled her into his arms. "No one snatched me away from you. It's my daughters' birthday party today, and you're not welcome. Please leave."

*Jason was* on the verge of losing his temper, but he tried to hold it back and asked her to *leave*.

*Bailey was* livid when she heard him talk about his daughters. "What about our son then? Have you shown any concern *to him?*"

Jason was growing impatient toward her accusations.

had always thought that he had neglected their son. However, the truth was that Jason had frequently visited their son in the hospital, but only when she was not around because he did not want to meet to deal with many troublesome tasks in his work, but none of that compared to the trouble that Bailey brought

care of our son every day while you're here hosting a birthday party for your so-called daughters! You're an animal, Jason. I've done so much for you, but you won't even look me in the eye. You're deliberately taking revenge on me,

listened to Bailey's complaints without saying a word. She did not know what happened between them over the past three years, but Jason did not seem as cruel as Bailey said he

you don't want to take care of Shane anymore, you can relinquish his custody to me, but if you're not going to leave now, I'm calling the police," Jason warned

had accused him of being heartless so many times that he was tired of listening

you!" Bailey roared. "If you dare to call the police, Jason Doyle, I'll make sure that you and that b\*tch will appear in the headlines

tried to get Sue in the tabloids before, and she had even written defamatory articles about Sue in the local forums using an

of them in the papers was something she had never

whatever you want," Jason said as he pulled out his phone. Sue did not stop him this

## **Chapter 1427**

Now that the drama was over, Luca breathed a sigh of relief. She was about to sit on the couch when she noticed Luke and Tommy standing in the side garden.

She was shocked. Why were they standing there?

As they looked at each other, Luke took Tommy's hand and said, "Let's go inside."

Luca watched the father and son walk away, then appear at the front door. She wondered if they were standing in the garden to watch the drama.

She did not know when they had appeared there, or how much they had heard.

After they came into the living room, Tommy pulled away from Luke's hand and ran toward Luca. "I miss you so much, Ms. Luca. Why are you here too?"

"I was invited," Luca smiled and took Tommy's hand. She lifted her head and glanced at Luke, then turned her head away.

Because of her, Tommy had been close to Kari and Teri since they were babies. It was normal for Sue to invite Tommy to the girls' birthday party, but Luca did not expect Luke to be the one sending him over.

'Shouldn't he be very busy now? After all, the scandal is still brewing...'

"You were invited too? Wow, this must be fate!" Tommy said happily. He waved at his father and said, "Come over here too, Daddy."

Luke stood there. He had no intention of going over.

said cloyingly. He wanted his father to stand closer

not know what Tommy was thinking, but Luke did. The boy liked Luca, so he wanted Luke to interact more with

was quite surprised that his son would think like

very close to Bianca, but ever since Luca appeared in his life, he had shifted all his affection to her. He could accept that Bianca had not returned yet, and he even tried to bring Luke closer

What had Luca done to Tommy?

did not know, and he did not go over to stand next to Luca. He looked at Jason and said, "I have something to discuss

noded and said, "Alright, Mr. Crawford. Shall we go to the

knew that Luca would take care of Tommy, so he and Jason went to the

looked at Tommy's chubby face and asked, "Tommy, have you and your Daddy been standing in the garden for a long

woman was throwing a tantrum, so Daddy brought me to the garden. You were so cool earlier when you protected those children. If I'm in danger one day, will you protect me as well?" Tommy raised his head and looked

gently pinched his cheeks. She would protect him without

**She** was willing to give up her life to protect her children.

"Of course I will. Right, where are your elder siblings?" Luca asked.

**Tommy** smiled happily and answered, "Lanie has extra classes in school, and Rainie has ballet classes. They've prepared presents for Kari and Teri. I have too, but Daddy forgot to bring them out of **the car.**"

*Luca nodded.* She guessed that Luke and Tommy must have come in because the caretaker left the front gate open in a hurry.

She turned her head and saw the caretaker and Sue lead the children down the stairs, so she reminded them, "Sue, I think the front gate is still open."

"Ah!" The caretaker exclaimed and said, "I'm so sorry. I was in a hurry to rush in earlier, and I forgot..."

"**It's** fine. Go and close it," Sue said. She generally did not have to worry about the security in that area.

*She* turned around and said to the children, "Let's get the party started, kids!"

The children cheered happily. They would not ask too many questions if they had food to eat and games to *play.*

*Sue* turned on the stereo system in the living room and said to the children, "Alright, let's welcome the stars of the day!"

The children cheered again. Sue played a birthday song on the stereo system, and Kari and Teri came down the stairs, wearing puffy *princess dresses.*

when she looked at the two children. The stylists had done an excellent job with their looks today. She believed that Nyla would be happy if she had the chance to wear a dress like

on the Island of Despair were either black or gray, and Luca had made baby clothes for Nyla using used clothes. No matter how nice she made them, they could not be princess dresses without the proper colors and

and Teri had sweet smiles on their faces as Sue led them to the

a five-tier cake with two princess figurines at the top. They looked like they were modeled after the

Teri, it's your birthday today. I hope that you can grow up healthily and happily. Shall we blow out the candles?" Sue said while placing the candles on

Daddy? I want Mommy and Daddy to blow out the candles with us," Teri said because she did not see Jason

looked around and did not see Jason either. She was going to take out her phone to call him when Jason and Luke came down

out the candles together, Daddy!"

Jason and Luke had finished discussing some serious business. He smiled and walked toward his

not going to just stand there. He walked over toward

was nervous when Luke got near her, but she realized that she

**Chapter 1428**

Luke's eyelids drooped when he heard that.

Luca looked at the eagerness on the child's face. The impostor Bianca was already dead, and Luke would probably never find the real Bianca...

On Tommy's next birthday, the woman who would blow out Tommy's candles with Tommy would be Tia...

Luca felt uneasy as she held the child's hand in her hand. The more she thought about Tia, the more awkward she felt standing next to Tommy and Luke.

She could understand why Luke would be deceived by the impostor Bianca. After all, he did not know that Bianca was an impostor. Now that the impostor Bianca was out of the picture, he was involved in a scandal with Tia.

She thought that the man she loved had changed...

However, the change was not entirely unexpected. The real Bianca had been missing for three years, so what right did she have to demand Luke to be loyal to her?

Luca saw that Sue was cutting the cake. She let go of Tommy's hand and said, "I'll go and help her."

Tommy nodded.

Luca went to the cake and offered to help.

Sue said, "Don't worry about it, Luca. Let me do it."

"It's fine. I can help you," Luca said. She did not want to hold Tommy's hand. That would make her feel as though she still had a bond with Luke.

they were putting the slices of cake onto paper plates, the caretaker came into the living room with Nina following behind

you so long, Nina?" Sue smiled when she

"Something happened in the family, so I was delayed. Here are the presents for

took the presents from Nina's hands and gave them to Kari

and nodded at Nina. She could see the haggardness on Nina's face even though Nina wore thick make-up to cover

smiled at her, then went over to Sue. "Do you need

worry about it. You just got here, so make yourself at home and have some cake," Sue said as she distributed the paper plates to the

pulled his hand away from Luke and ran over to Nina's side. "I miss you so much, Godmother. Why haven't you been

patted the child's head and said, "I'm sorry, I have been very busy lately. I'll bring you to the theme park when I'm

cheered happily. He could understand that Nina was busy with her

was glad to see that Tommy still had a good relationship with Nina. She handed a paper plate to Tommy and said, "Have some cake,

**"Thank** you, Ms. Luca!" Tommy smiled and took the plate.

Luke said nothing as he watched the interaction, though he seemed **pensive**.

Jason went over to him and asked, "Mr. Crawford, shall we continue our conversation from earlier?"

**They** had not finished their discussion in the study. Luke called for a timeout because he knew that Kari and Teri would want Jason to be there when they blew out the candles on their birthday *cake*.

**Luke** nodded, and the two men went upstairs. Tommy was in safe hands, so Luke had nothing to **worry about**.

**Nina shook** her head and smiled. "Tommy calls me 'Godmother' but calls you 'Ms. Luca.' Why does it sound like I'm older *than you?*"

Luca smiled.

Sue smiled and said, "It's that good? It shows that Tommy respects *you more*."

"That's true, but I'd like to be young forever," Nina said while touching her cheek. Looking at the children happily eating their cake, she was reminded of the daughter that she *never had*.

Even though it had been so long, she could not help but feel guilty and sad whenever she thought of that child.

*The biggest regret in her life was that she could not bring that child to this world.*

**"What do** you have to worry about? Doesn't Mr. Mallory dote upon you?" Sue handed the cake knife to the caretaker and asked her to cut up the rest of the cake. If the children wanted seconds, they could help themselves with the slices.

froze when she heard Percy's name

wrong?" Sue realized that something was amiss when Nina did not reply

nothing. Maintaining my looks has nothing to do with men. I'll have to spend my own money on beauty care products," Nina said. She was unwilling to talk

had the man to blame for her current

without Percy, her life was not going to get

did not say anything. She discreetly observed

had been friends with Nina for many years, and she could tell what Nina was thinking even when Nina was silent. Naturally, she sensed Nina's unease over the

it would be presumptuous of her to show Nina concern if Nina did not voice her

To be frank, though, I think I'd have fewer wrinkles on my face if Jason can stop making me angry about him," Sue said while dusting her hands. She was smiling even though she

did Mr. Doyle do to you this time? You rarely complain about him," Nina said while munching on a piece of cake. She thought that the cake looked

It's all because of his annoying ex-wife. You would've seen the drama if you had come a little earlier. She's purposely doing this on my daughters' birthday," Sue said while handing Luca

## **Chapter 1429**

Sue shook her head and said, "Which of their plans would involve a psychologist?"

Nina shook her head to show that she did not know. Percy was on an overseas business trip, and she did not know what was going on.

Sue looked at Luca, who had been keeping silent. "Luca, aren't you working at the T Corporation building? Have you heard any stories?"

"If Mr. Crawford and Mr. Doyle were really planning something, they would have done so in secret. I'm only a researcher, so what could I possibly know? I hear many other employees gossiping about the news, and that's about it," Luca said with a smile. She ate the last bite of the cake and felt full.

She did not want to hear her friends talk about the issue. The taste of the cake seemed to have changed, and the cream clung to her throat and made it hard to breathe.

Luca was uneasy for the rest of the party.

Until the party ended, Luke and Jason remained upstairs discussing something.

The other parents came and brought their children away. Only Kari, Teri, and Tommy were left in the living room. They were tired from the party games and were sitting on the couch watching cartoons on the television.

Luca and Nina helped Sue clean up the mess in the living room.

Even though the children were well-behaved, messing up the living room was inevitable because there were so many of them.

Sue sighed with relief and said, "Thanks to you two for helping me. If it were left up to me and the caretaker, we don't know how long it'll take us. Now, I finally understand why Jason suggested hosting the birthday party at an event venue. It's so much of a hassle to clean up."

that party venues are more convenient, but I'm sure that the children would appreciate it better when you host their birthday party at home," Nina smiled

they tidied up the place, Luca saw that it was getting quite late. She told Sue that she wanted to go

said, "Are you going home? I can send

that it was a good idea, so she agreed to

they got into Nina's car, Nina drove the car toward Luca's apartment. None of them said anything until Luca broke the silence and asked, "You haven't been sleeping well recently, have

surprised. She asked, "Did my makeup

your makeup is perfect, but I can see that," Luca said as she pointed at her eyes. "I can tell that your eyes are quite puffy under the

when she heard that. "I didn't expect you to see through the façade. Indeed, I haven't been sleeping well

in modern times face a lot of stress, and that might be the cause of poor sleep quality. You don't have to worry though, you can alleviate the symptoms through medication," Luca said. She did not know the exact source of Nina's stress, but she could guess that it had something to do with her family and

Nina could have a good night's sleep, she would be able to think more clearly. Things would not get any better for Nina if she did not sleep well, and the stress would only

She did not want to imagine what would happen to Nina if this went on.

"I **regularly** take sleeping pills, but so many things have been happening lately, and the pills don't really have any effect on me anymore," Nina said. She did not know why she told Luca more personal things.

*She was* only acquainted with Luca a while ago, but it felt as though she had known Luca for a long *time*.

"Have you consulted a psychologist? In any case, you might be able to find some relief if you change a different type of medication or if you can find a friend to talk to about your problems. A good night's sleep is more important than anything else," **Luca said.**

The Nina she knew was cheerful and outgoing, but the Nina sitting next to her now was like a **different person.**

*Luca* did not want to see her *that way.*

Nina smiled. She was about to reply when her phone started to **ring.**

**She** was unwilling to answer the call, but she put on the Bluetooth headset and answered it **anyway.** "What?"

*The* call was from Jean. Nothing good could possibly come out from him.

**Jean's voice** was loud and uncouth. "Where are you now?" He *yelled.*

driving. Why?" Nina said brusquely. She did not lose her temper because Luca was sitting next

was late for the birthday party because of Jean. He had tried to get her to go home so that he could ask for more money

back home but did not give him any money. After yelling at each other for a while, Nina slammed the door and left the

in the hospital now because of you, and the doctor is trying to resuscitate her! Do you think you can neglect your mother just because you have money now?" Jean

was shocked when she heard that her mother was in the hospital again, but she knew that Jean might be lying to her. "Are you telling the truth?" She

in the mood to lie now. I'm at the payment counter. If you don't believe me, you can hear the noises behind me. The doctor wants me to pay the bill now, and I don't have any money. If you don't come soon, the doctor will send Mom home!" Jean said and lifted the phone into the

the usual hospital sounds over the phone, and her expression changed drastically. She knew that Jean would lie to her to get money from her, but he would not deliberately run to the hospital to do

considered the possibility that her mother and her brother might conspire to scam her money, so she said, "Which hospital is it? I'll go over

Luca heard that, she turned her head and looked at

told her the name of the hospital, cursed for a bit, and

### **Chapter 1430**

Luca looked at the LCD screen. Indeed, Anna's name was on the screen, and she was undergoing an examination.

Jean stashed a stack of bills in Nina's hand and said, "Don't just stand there. Go pay up. I managed to convince the doctor to conduct the examination first."

"Haven't you paid?" Nina's hand trembled in anger as she looked at bills in her hand.

"I told you that I don't have money! That's enough talk. Go and pay up. Other than the charges for the examination, there's also the resuscitation fee," Jean said heartlessly.

"I just gave Mom this month's living expenses. How can you not have money?" Nina was about to pass out from anger. It was her responsibility to take care of her parents, but she was not responsible for Jean.

She had only given the month's living expenses to her mother when she visited her earlier. It was impossible that they did not have money!

"Why are you asking so many questions? I said that we don't have money. You can't wait for Mom to die, right?" Jean said impatiently. He did not want to tell Nina where the money had gone.

"You..." Nina was at a loss for words.

Jean continued his merciless tirade. "What about it? Go and pay up now. Don't think that I don't know Percy gives you a ton of money when you're with him. Is money more important than your mother? Nina, oh, Nina, if that's who you really are, I feel sad for Mom!"

trembled with anger. Indeed, Percy had been generous with her, but that did not mean she accepted than living in his mansion and using his pocket money as living expenses, she had not touched the money in the bank account that Percy had given

that she would eventually split up with Percy, and she tried to save up for that

for the bank account, she wanted to return the bank card to Percy the day they left the house earlier, I only brought the money for Mom. I don't even have my debit card with me now. How am I supposed to pay?"

that Jean was holding Anna's handbag, so she said, "That's Mom's handbag, right? Give it to me. I want to see if there's money inside. I'll use that to pay the

can't." Jean held the handbag tightly. Anna had just put the money in her handbag when she suddenly fell ill. Jean dialed emergency services in a hurry. Only when they were in the ambulance, Jean realized that he had brought Anna's handbag along with him. That was why he was currently holding onto his

could tell that the money was inside the handbag. "Give me the handbag. Saving Mom's life is the most important thing

**Jean** shook his head. "Go and pay up then. Why do you want the handbag? The handbag belongs to Mom, and neither of us has the right to *open it*."

"*You're* afraid that I'll use the money in it, right?" Nina glared at him, feeling thoroughly defeated that she was not able to take the money away from Jean. Jean was willing to neglect his mother's life because he wanted the money in the handbag.

"*Hmph*, what nonsense!" Jean said. He was planning to use the money to go to the nightclub later. If he gave the money to Nina, he would have to stay **at home**.

"**Give** it to me!" Nina rushed up to him and tried to snatch the handbag.

**Jean** was taller and stronger than her. He lifted the handbag high and shoved *Nina* away.

He did not hold back. Nina stumbled a step backward.

**Luca** quickly went up and supported her. "Are you okay?" She whispered.

"I'm fine." Nina shook her head and stood up **straight**.

**Jean's** gaze fell on Luca. It was then that he realized the woman was Nina's friend.

sinister thought appeared in Jean's head when he saw Luca's beautiful face. While he hugged the handbag tightly, his gaze swept up and down

felt uneasy when she saw Jean ogling her. She felt a chill down her

might look like a decent person, but looks were deceiving. There was not a single shred of good in his personality

fought the urge to slap him when he shoved Nina

to feel guilty for what happened to him, thinking that it was her fault that caused

realized that Jean's personality had always been like that. He happened to be very good

to the CT scan room opened, and the nurse wheeled Anna out on a gurney. She glanced at Jean and asked him, "Have you paid

you that I didn't bring my debit card. Give me the money first, and I'll reimburse you later. That'll do, right?" Nina compromised. She really did not bring her debit card with