

## **Be Gentle 2171**

### **Chapter 2171**

Luca could sense that Yuri was unhappy, but she did not say anything. She focused on watching the performance.

Rainie was the star ballerina. She attracted everyone's attention the moment she stepped on the stage.

The expressiveness of her facial expressions and her skilled elegant dance moves were a display of the dancing skills she had picked up over the years.

Luca picked up the camera and kept taking photos of Rainie dancing on the stage. At the same time, she noticed that something was wrong as she was sitting near the stage.

The stage was bright enough, and that was why Luca did not switch on the flash. It did not affect the photos' quality either.

The ballet performance lasted for 40 minutes. Luca heard Thea talking to Yuri after the dancers made their curtain calls, "Mommy, I want to get into the dance academy too. Sign me up please."

Yuri shot a glance at Luca. She was lowering her head and fiddling with the camera as though she was not paying attention to what the kid was saying.

Yuri lowered her head and comforted her daughter. "Thea, be good. We'll talk about this after New Year."

"Why should we wait until New Year? We'll be having winter break soon. Mommy, if Rainie can perform on stage, so can I," Thea said competitively.

Yuri felt helpless when her daughter said so.

Not everyone could enter the dance academy Rainie was attending. The kids may take it as a hobby class, but the teachers in the academy would only select the candidates who had naturally given talents and were willing to work hard.

Thea's ballet was not exceptionally good back then. Yuri went along with her daughter and signed her up for the admission interview. If her daughter was able to get into the academy, it would make Yuri look good as her mother.

failed to pass the interview.

claimed that Thea's foundation was not strong enough, and they could not see any dancing talent in Thea. They suggested Thea head to other dancing schools to continue improving her dancing skills and wait for the next

did not manage to get into the academy during the second

of the teachers was kind enough to tell Yuri that there was another way to pass the interview. She told her that if Thea could win a dance competition, then she would be able to enter the academy without going through the

a ballet competition for kids after New Year. Yuri was thinking of getting Thea to win that in the auditorium lit up once the dancers made their curtain

up as the other audience members got up from their seats too. She had listened and understood what Yuri and her daughter were talking about. Thea's intention to enter the dance academy was not because she wanted to learn but because she did not want to lose to

with such a competitive mindset usually learned it from her parents and elders in her family.

the same as before. The child would only grow up taking the wrong path if she grew up in such an environment.

was not up to Luca to comment on such

left Yuri and her daughter and headed backstage. Rainie was sitting on the dressing table chair, waiting for her teacher to help her untie her

**Luca walked** toward her, got down at Rainie's eye level, and said, "Wow, Rainie, you're an awesome dancer!"

**Rainie was** delighted to see Luca. "Ms. Luca, is that true?"

"Yes. I took photos. You did a good job. Many uncles and aunts who were sitting around me were praising you," said Luca. She did not lie to Rainie. Although most of them kept silent, Luca was still able to hear people praising Rainie when she was performing.

"I was afraid that I couldn't perform well. I'm different from the other students, after all. I didn't have much time to practice..." said Rainie. A few students who performed on the stage were different from **her**.

They would practice dancing at the dancing academy every day, while Rainie had to focus on her studies. She could only practice dance at home at night and when she headed to the dance academy on the *weekends*.

Hence, a few students were unhappy with their teacher's decision of making Rainie the star ballerina. It was until the teacher asked Rainie to perform four difficult dance moves consecutively in front of everyone that they shut their mouths.

*Rainie was* gifted, and she did not need to put in too much effort to dance well. That was why her teacher gave her the *chance*.

However, Rainie was worried that she would ruin the performance as she did not have enough time to practice. She felt pressured, but she did not show it to the others.

"But you did a great job. Well done, Rainie. Even though you practiced less than the others, you were more focused and serious when you were practicing the dance. So, there's no need to feel insecure. You're good at it, and you'll improve in the future."

Luca knew the child did not fully devote herself to the performance on the stage, and that was why she deliberately encouraged *her*.

Rainie was her daughter. As her mother, she was able to notice every little change in her.

Ms. Luca." Rainie appreciated

rose to her feet and said, "Let me help you with your hair and remove your makeup."

Rainie nodded. The teachers were very busy now, and they had no time to help her. Rainie usually needed someone to help her with these. She could not handle them

changed back into her clothes after her makeup was removed.

the bag filled with the ballet costume and pointe shoes from Rainie. She said, "Rainie, let me send you back to

Luca, I don't have to go back to school," Rainie replied immediately.

"Huh?" Luca looked at her.

teacher told us there are no classes in the afternoon. We don't have to go back to school," explained Rainie. This was the customary practice of the academy after the

dumbfounded as she did not expect that.

would have to take care of Rainie if she did not have to go back to the dance academy.

was easy to take care of Rainie, but she thought Rainie was going back to the dance academy, so she already

## **Chapter 2172**

Rainie was smiling as she noticed that Luca was about to say 'Mommy'...

That would only mean Luca still saw them as her children. Hence, it must be what their father had told them. Their mother had some unspeakable reason, and that was why she did not acknowledge them.

Rainie was thinking of telling Lanie about it after he came back from school.

Luca brought Rainie out of the amusement park. All the open-air parking lots were occupied with cars. Hence, Luca parked her car in the multi-story car park when she came here.

Luca and Rainie ran into Yuri and Thea when they walked into the car park.

"Hello, Aunt Yuri. Hello, Thea," Rainie greeted them. Rainie was looking for Luca when she was on the stage, and that was when she saw Yuri and Thea sitting beside Luca.

"Oh Rainie, you did such a great job." Yuri complimented her while her gaze fell on the two's interlocked hands.

Those who did not know would have thought that they were mother and daughter.

"Thank you, Aunt Yuri." Rainie could sense how much sincerity was in Yuri's compliment.

Yuri added, "I didn't expect you to dance so well when you're busy with your studies. Rainie, do come back to Crawford Manor during your free time. Perhaps you can teach Thea some dancing skills. She's hoping to get into your dancing academy too."

"Good luck to Thea." Rainie gave her a sweet smile and turned to look at Luca, "Ms. Luca, aren't you going to meet a friend? Let's go. We'd better not be late for it."

Yuri was thinking if she should correct her daughter's wrong perception, Thea held her hand and said, "Mommy, it's cold. Let's go

had to put aside her thoughts. She smiled and said to her daughter, "Alright. Let's go

On the other hand.

drove to the restaurant near the

Amur that they would meet at the apartment and she would cook some home-cooked food for him. However, Rainie was coming along with her now. Luca was worried that her child would imagine things, so she changed the destination to a

at the restaurant ten minutes earlier. He was wondering why Luca would suddenly change her mind and choose to meet him at a restaurant, but he understood at once when he saw Luca bringing a little girl into the

worried that the little girl would misunderstand their

at Rainie with his deep eyes. Before Luca could say anything, Amur knew who the little girl was.

little girl looked like Luca before she had the plastic surgery, and she looked a little similar to Nyla, who was on the Island of Despair.

must be the eldest daughter whom Luca told him about before.

## **Chapter 2173**

Luca sat there doing nothing after she finished ordering the food. It was inconvenient for her to talk with Amur as Rainie was there.

Amur knew Luca had wanted to meet him alone in the beginning, so she must have something to tell him. However, Rainie was here together with them. She could not tell Amur what she wanted to say.

After all, the child was not that young anymore. She understood a lot of things.

Rainie glanced at Luca, then she turned to look at Amur. She smiled and said, "Ms. Luca, I saw a swing there. Can I go over there to play?"

"Ah. Sure." Luca turned to look at the swing. It was a play area designed by the restaurant for the kids so that the parents could relax when they brought their children here. "Be careful. Don't go anywhere else."

"Okay. I know." Rainie stood up and strolled toward the play area.

Luca was happy that there was a kids' play area in the restaurant. Otherwise, it would be inconvenient to talk to Amur.

"Is she one of your children you've been missing?" Amur asked Luca in Russian. No one in the restaurant should be able to understand the language.

Luca shot a glance in the direction where Rainie was. She was sitting on the swing and playing on it.

Rainie waved at Luca when she noticed she was looking at her.

Luca smiled and waved back at her. Then, she replied to Amur, "Yes. She has a twin brother."

"Who does the twin brother look like?" Amur suddenly asked.

answered, "He resembles his father. Why are you asking this?"

thinking that if the boy resembled you, he'd be good-looking," said Amur. "Rainie looks like you back then."

had been nearly three years since Luca changed her looks, Amur could still remember what she looked like

for a boy to look like his father," said Luca. She did not think it was bad for her son to resemble Luke.

his shoulders and added, "I think Rainie looks cute. And it's

look like her?" Luca smiled while watching her daughter. She would always look at Nyla and think about Rainie when she was on the Island of Despair. Now that she had left the Island of Despair to carry out her mission, looking at Rainie reminded her of

both resemble you," replied Amur.

the subject of the conversation and turned to look at Amur. "Amur, was the mission you carried out a dangerous

Amur could not bear to lie to her, so he avoided answering

matter if you refuse to tell me. I know it all. Otherwise, you wouldn't have left your phone in the apartment. You were afraid that I'd locate your whereabouts and find you, right?" Luca had it all figured out. She knew the truth even if Amur did not tell

He came back safely after completing the mission, so there was nothing to hide. "But I'm

**"You're lying,"** Luca shook her head and said. "Your lips are white. You must be injured. And you're seriously injured. But you can get out of the bed and walk normally after a few days."

*Amur wondered* if Luca could read his mind. How did she know he was injured by looking at his **face?**

*"I'm* a European. I'm born with fair skin." Amur refused to **admit it.**

*"It's okay* if you don't want to admit it. I can see it. I've always told you to protect yourself, but you refuse to listen to me. Although I understand it's unavoidable, you're not alone. Someone is on the

island waiting for you to go back,” said Luca. She took a bottle of medicine out of her bag and handed it to *him*.

*She* had this feeling that Amur was injured. That was why she grabbed the medicine and brought it along with her when she went out this morning. The medicine was for curing external wounds, and it worked much better than the medicine used in the *hospitals*.

“You know how to use this.” Luca placed the bottle in front of him when Amur did not take it from her.

**Amur smiled** bitterly. He would be admitting that he was injured if he took the bottle of medicine.

*Even* though Luca was not in love with him, she still cared about **him**.

She might fly into a rage if she found out that Amur was injured and almost lost his life while carrying out the mission.

Amur felt grateful that Luca cared about him.

**“Take the** medicine even if I got it wrong. It helps to cure wounds that aren’t serious as well,” Luca *persuaded him*.

Amur took the bottle of medicine. Luca's medicine was good. His wound would heal faster if he applied her medicine.

friends for?” Luca shook her head helplessly. Then, she asked, “You’re not allowed to tell me what mission you were carrying out,

noded and said, “Yes.” He recalled what happened when he was carrying out the mission and added, “But I ran into two people when I was carrying out the

asked with curiosity. It must be people she knew if Amur mentioned it to

looking for herbs, but they got lost in the woods. I found the stronghold of the organization there. The name they told me was your code name,”

knew what happened when Amur mentioned the herbs.

“Dr. Shanks is looking for

you were in trouble. I wondered why the two of them were looking for herbs...” Amur let out a sigh of relief. It turned out that Shanks needed the herbs,

was worried that something was wrong with Luca’s health and that was why she asked the two people to look for

felt relieved after finding out

Amur noticed that Luca was glancing at Rainie out of the corners of her eyes when she was talking to him. She was being careful, afraid that Rainie would be

**Chapter 2174**

"There's no need to get anything for her. We're just meeting up and having lunch together. We don't need to make it so formal, right, Rainie?" Luca lowered her head and looked at Rainie, who was drinking her water, with a smile on her face.

Amur noticed how gentle Luca's smiling eyes were. It was how she looked at Nyla when she was on the Island of Despair.

It must be difficult for Rainie to part with Luca if she had to. Luca was a good mother, after all.

However, Nyla could not bear to part with Luca either. They were her daughters. How could she stand the thought of parting with her daughters?

Amur made up his mind. He must work hard to prevent Luca from going through the pain of parting with her family again.

Rainie nodded and agreed with what Luca said, but Amur thought it was inappropriate.

Amur stood up and said, "No. It's impolite of me. The dishes aren't served yet. Please excuse me for a minute."

"Wait." Luca stopped Amur while thinking fast. "It's really okay. There's no need to trouble yourself. You can buy Rainie dessert if you insist. She has a sweet tooth."

Rainie went along with Luca and said, "Yes, Uncle Amur. You can buy me dessert."

"That's all?" Amur thought it was too perfunctory. Who would buy desserts for a child during their first meeting?

"Kids love eating snacks. Usually, when it's your first time meeting a child, most people would get them snacks apart from toys and clothes. If you think one isn't enough, you can order two. I'd like to have some too." Luca deliberately said that as she thought it was a bad idea for Amur to go out and get something for Rainie when it was freezing out there.

no choice but to pick up the menu and order a few desserts for the two of them when Luca insisted on buying Rainie desserts. Rainie had also agreed to what she

him and said, "Amur, that's enough. We can't finish it all if you order more. It'll be a waste."

when Amur stopped ordering, and he said to the waitress, "That's all for

waitress smiled and took the menu

stuck out her little tongue. She could not help but sigh. "Uncle Amur, are you trying to make me

talked to children, so he asked with confusion, "Of course not. What's

must think that I'm too skinny, and that's why you ordered so many desserts. You're trying to make me fat," Rainie said mischievously.

she was a child, she could sense Amur's feelings for Luca. However, she could not seem to hate him. She thought Amur was nice and friendly.

didn't mean that, I guess it's alright for kids to be a little chubbier, right?" Amur was amused. He did not expect the little girl to have such a witty tongue when she looked so decent and

I have to dance. So, Uncle Amur, you'll have to eat more later." Rainie frowned, then smiled again.

Amur looked at Luca with confusion.

Luca explained, "Rainie is learning ballet. She just finished her ballet performance before coming **here**."

Luca sounded proud when she mentioned it.

*It was something to be proud of when her daughter could dance ballet well.*

Amur gave Rainie a thumbs-up and praised her, "Wow, that's impressive. Many little girls in my country love ballet too. Rainie, would you like to become a ballet dancer?"

"*Uncle* Amur, I'm still young. I can't make up my mind now. Let's talk about the future next time," said Rainie. Although she loved ballet, she was not sure whether or not she would become a professional ballet dancer in the *future*.

After all, her father told her that life and hobbies were different things. Life could be boring if it was all about *hobbies*.

*Rainie thought* what he said was reasonable. That was why she listened to Luke and studied well while treating dancing as her hobby.

**"Really? Well** done, Rainie." Amur could not help but compliment her. What Rainie said was not something a child at her age would say.

*Perhaps* it was because of Luke's *influence*...

**The** little girl in front of her was more mature than those her *age*.

**An** idea flashed through Luca's mind. She took the camera out and said, "I took some photos. Would you like to take a look at them?"

sense Luca was proud of her daughter, Rainie. He nodded and took the camera from

seen them either," said Rainie. She stood up and sat beside Amur. She looked at the photos that Luca took together with

Outside the restaurant.

was sitting in the car, looking at the situation in the restaurant through the glass. Then, he made a

Luke's voice came from the other end of the line after the call was

Ms. Craw is having lunch with a man in the restaurant," reported the man. He was instructed by Luke to protect Luca and report to him her whereabouts.

man? Who is it?" Luke lifted his hand to signal Jason to stop reporting

back the words that were at the tip of his tongue when he saw Luke's



not sure, but he looks European," answered the man as he picked up the file and looked into it. The information about Luca's relationships was in the

checked for a while and said, "Got it. His name

him..." Luke's voice sounded grim at once.

## **Chapter 2175**

Jason noticed Luke's gloomy expression. He was sure Luca had something to do with it.

"What are you doing?" Luke's face darkened, and he asked Jason when he did not hear his report.

Jason immediately came back to his senses. He put on a serious expression and reported to Luke about the progress of the acquisition.

Another American-owned company was planning to purchase Brown's company at the same time. That was why they were hardly making any progress with the acquisition. Luke frowned and asked when he heard Jason reporting to him, "It's too slow."

The words were sonorous and powerful. Jason could deeply feel Luke's dissatisfaction.

Then, Jason explained, "It has become even more difficult to acquire the company as other American-owned companies are joining in. That's why the progress slowed down a little..."

Luke looked up and shifted his gaze to Jason. He looked at him with his cold, dark eyes.

Jason understood what he meant. This was not about the slow progress. It was Luke who refused to accept such a reason...

"Boss, we'll try our best to speed up the progress," Jason promised him right away, hoping that it could calm Luke down. However, Luke was not only unhappy with the acquisition progress but it was because of the phone call too.

Luke rose to his feet and walked toward the window. He looked down at the buildings outside. The hotel he was currently staying at was the landmark of that place. It was the tallest building in the city, and he was on the highest floor of the building. He was able to look down at the whole city when he stood beside the window.

It was just like the acquisition plan this time. If he could acquire the Brown family's company, he could gain a foothold in this city. It played an important role in expanding T Corporation.

"T Corporation has to acquire the company this time," said Luke with overbearing determination in his eyes.

not allow any mistakes in the acquisition this time. He could not let the chance slip by and fall into someone else's hands.

Jason understood how important the acquisition was. Otherwise, Luke would not have come here to work on the acquisition himself.

want it to be done as soon as possible,” said Luke. He wanted to go back to A City after handling the work

forced to leave the city when he had just made a breakthrough in his relationship with Luca. He would not allow the distance that he had just closed between them to grow apart again. That was why he had to return to A City as soon as

Boss,” said Jason. He glanced at the time and reminded him, “Boss, they’re waiting for you to host the meeting downstairs in 10

branch office was right below the hotel. It was convenient for them to work here when they were here for a business

glanced at the time. Although he missed Luca, he had to walk out of the

way to free Luca and bring her back home was to become

destroy the Island of Despair once, so he could destroy it again even if they had changed their

followed behind Luke and walked out of the suite, thinking that everyone who attended the meeting would have to suffer since Luke was in such a bad

...

On the other hand.

**Amur rushed** to pay the bill after they finished eating *lunch*.

As Luca watched Amur grab the bill and walk toward the cashier counter, she shifted her gaze and lowered her head to look at Rainie. “Have you had enough to *eat*?”

**“Ms. Luca, I’m full.”** Rainie picked up the napkin and wiped her mouth. Her moves were so elegant as though she was a **princess**.

Luca smiled.

*Amur walked* toward them after paying the bill. He said, “Done. Do you have any plans after this?”

**Luca** shot a glance at Rainie. The kids usually had the habit of taking a nap in the afternoon. They would be tired if they did not take a nap. Luca replied, “I’m going *home*.”

**Amur was** a little disappointed. He was planning to bring them to hang out somewhere **else**.

However, he would still stick to Luca’s plan. He nodded and replied, “Let me send you home.”

**“It’s** okay, Amur. I can’t trouble you to send me here and there. Just go home.” Luca shook her head and rejected his offer. Although Amur did not admit it, Luca knew he was wounded.

**What** mattered the most for Amur now was to get enough rest.

**Amur** unclenched his fists. He had no idea why Luca refused to let him send them back, but he thought it would be better not to speculate. After all, Luca meant it when she said she did not want him to send them back.

when you're on your way

sense the unwillingness in his voice. She nodded and said, "Remember to apply the medicine. Besides, Tina is worried about you. Reply to her messages since you're

frowned. He wanted to explain to Luca that nothing was going on between him and

news. But you must take care of things that you should take care of." Luca blinked at him. She did not make it clear as Rainie was there too. Considering that they had hidden identities, if Amur and Tina ended up being in a relationship, that would mean he would be dragging Tina into danger. Hence, Luca wanted Amur to stay on the right side of

Luca and Rainie

two of them climbed back into the car. Rainie sat on the passenger seat, fastened her seat belt, and glanced outside the window. Amur was standing there looking at them as though he was reluctant to part

why did you ask Uncle Amur to apply medicine? Is he hurt?"

told me he accidentally hurt himself." Luca waved at Amur, signaling him to hurry up and go back home so that he would not catch a cold. Then, she drove the car away and

did not say much. Otherwise, Amur would keep standing

only leave after she left.

with him and Ms. Tina..." Rainie used to go to T Corporation often. Back then, Luke had instructed Tina to look after her and Lanie in the office.

## **Chapter 2176**

Luca got out of the car after she parked the car. She closed the door quietly so that she would not wake Rainie up.

Luca walked past the front of the car and opened the passenger seat's door. She unfastened Rainie's seat belt and pulled the jacket up as it had slid down Rainie's body. Then, she carried Rainie in her arms.

Even though Rainie was skinny, she was heavy.

However, Luca managed to carry Rainie in her arms and walk into the villa without much effort.

Aunt Neile was surprised to see Luca carrying Rainie back in her arms. Luca shook her head when she was about to speak, so Aunt Neile immediately shut her mouth.

Luca carried Rainie up the stairs.

Aunt Neile followed behind closely, worried that Luca could not carry the child. After all, Rainie was already a ten-year-old child, while Luca looked so skinny. What if Luca could not carry the child all the way to her bedroom?

However, Luca carried Rainie in her arms and made her way up the stairs steadily. It showed that Aunt Neile was overthinking.

Luca firmly held her daughter in her arms.

Aunt Neile saw Luca walk toward Rainie's bedroom. She hurried over to help them push the door open.

Luca walked into the bedroom and placed the child on the bed. She took Rainie's shoes and socks off, tucked her into bed, and let out a sigh of relief.

Aunt Neile gave her a thumbs-up.

Luca reckoned that Aunt Neile was praising her for her strength without saying anything. Carrying a ten-year-old child while walking up the stairs without catching a breath and placing the child on the bed without waking her up was indeed an unbelievable feat.

rose to her feet as she looked at Rainie, who was deeply asleep. It tugged at Luca's heartstrings when she saw Rainie smiling with her eyes closed in the car just now. That was why Luca was reluctant to wake the child

a hand gesture to signal Aunt Neile to leave

understood what she meant. She nodded and left Rainie's room together with

bedroom door was closed behind them. After walking for some distance, Aunt Neile spoke, "Ms. Craw, you're so strong. I can't believe you can carry

so delicately built. If it were not for Aunt Neile seeing it herself, she could never have imagined Luca carrying Rainie in her arms.

child's not heavy," said Luca. The punching bag she carried on the Island of Despair was much heavier

Abel had sent to train Luca often asked her to carry a punching bag that weighed 50 kilograms on her back while running to train her physique. He did not care if Luca could handle it or not, she had to run. If she ran slow, she would be given extra training.

was why even though Luca's body was initially weak, she had gotten used to the inhuman training she went through in those years.

Carrying Rainie was nothing to her.

impressive. Did Ms. Rainie fall asleep?" Aunt Neile asked. She was worried that Rainie was

asleep. It's her nap time now. She couldn't hold herself back any longer and fell asleep in the car," replied Luca.

Neile glanced in the direction of the bedroom and nodded. "Ms. Craw, you should get some rest too. I'm going downstairs to do

Thank you." Luca headed downstairs too.

She walked out of the house and marched to the car. She took the bag Rainie put her ballet costume in and camera out of the car.

**It** was inconvenient for Luca to get these when she had to carry *Rainie*.

She strolled back into the house carrying those in her hands. She placed the bag on the sofa and said to Aunt Neile, "Aunt Neile, this is Rainie's ballet costume. It needs to be dry-cleaned. Please bring it to the laundry shop."

"Okay, no problem," answered Aunt Neile, who was tidying up the **living room**.

*Luca carried* her bag and camera and headed upstairs.

*Luca did* not rest. She transferred the photos in the camera to her laptop. It reminded her of Nyla when she watched Rainie's incredible performance on the *stage*.

*If Nyla* had grown up in the same environment as Rainie, would she like ballet too?

*Luca* let out a sigh when she thought of her youngest daughter. It was probably because of her living environment, so the things Nyla was interested in *were odd...*

**However**, Luca hoped that she could implement her plans earlier so that she could bring her daughter out of that environment.

Otherwise, it would bring nothing but trouble for the child's growth.

**Luca lay** down on her bed after turning off her laptop, thinking of taking a **nap**.

*Perhaps she* was tired. She fell asleep after covering herself with the blanket.

*Luca* had no idea how long she had slept. She felt like someone was watching her and slowly opened her eyes. Then, she realized Rainie was sitting on her bed, smiling and looking at her.

Luca, you're awake!" Before Luca could say anything, Rainie

her forehead and looked at the child. She asked, "Why are you

here after I woke up. You were sleeping, so I didn't wake you up," answered Rainie with a smile on her glanced at her phone. There were a few unread messages. She looked at the time and realized that she had slept for

slept for so long?" She remembered that she was planning to take a nap, but she did not expect that she would sleep for

a light sleeper. She usually could not fall asleep in the afternoon. She was only closing her eyes to you were deeply asleep just now. And it sounded like you were talking in your sleep." Rainie stood up and looked at

was talking in my sleep? What did I say?" Luca did not recall talking in her

sounded like you were calling Daddy's name," said Rainie, and she was still smiling. Although Rainie used the words 'sounded like', she had heard it clearly with her own two

reddened, and she quickly denied it. "I wasn't dreaming just now. You must have heard it wrong."

probably got it wrong. But Ms. Luca, you were sleeping soundly," said Rainie. If she were not afraid of waking up Luca, she would have climbed up Luca's bed and cuddled with

the happiest thing to be able to cuddle with her mother and sleep together with  
was tired." Luca massaged her aching forehead, feeling

## **Chapter 2177**

Luca and Rainie were baking cookies in the kitchen, while Aunt Neile was tidying up the living room.

The villa's telephone rang. Aunt Neile answered the call with a puzzled look on her face. After all, people nowadays used smartphones, and there was hardly anyone who would call the villa's landline number. The telephone was basically a decoration in the house. Besides, it was the first time the telephone rang after she started working here.

"Hello, this is the Crawford family." Aunt Neile picked up the receiver.

"Is Luca there?" Luke's voice came from the other end of the line.

Aunt Neile was startled for a moment, and she replied, "Mr. Crawford? You're looking for Ms. Craw, right?"

"Is she in the villa?" Luke asked.

"Yes. Ms. Craw is in the kitchen. She's baking cookies with Ms. Rainie. Do you need me to inform her to pick up your call?" Aunt Neile asked.

"Never mind. If she's at the villa, then it's fine," said Luke. He called Luca after the meeting ended, but no one was answering the call.

Hence, he called Aunt Neile, but she did not answer the call either.

He had no choice but to dial the villa's landline number.

"Okay, Mr. Crawford," Aunt Neile was confused. Luke called to ask about Luca, but he did not ask her to answer the call. That was weird.

Luke added, "Aunt Neile, bring your phone with you when you're doing house chores. I need you to pick up my calls if anything happens."

I'm sorry, Mr. Crawford." Aunt Neile knew Luke had tried to call her when he told her that, but she had been carrying her phone with her. She did not hear her phone ring, though. She took her phone out of her pocket and realized she had no idea when her phone had been switched to airplane mode.

kids must've touched my phone and switched it to airplane mode. That's why I didn't hear the phone ringing. I'm sorry," explained

okay. I'll be back in a few days. Take good care of them." Luke hung up the call after that.

Neile listened to the busy tone coming from the other end of the line. She hung up the call even though she thought it was strange. Then, she turned off airplane mode on her phone. She could not help but mutter to herself, "It looks like I can't let the kids mess with my phone anymore. Otherwise, they'll turn on the airplane mode again and I'll miss Mr. Crawford's calls. I'll be fired sooner or later if that

out of the kitchen and heard Aunt Neile muttering to herself. She asked with curiosity, "Aunt Neile, what are

Neile put her phone back into her pocket and replied, "Nothing. Mr. Crawford called the landline just now. That was when I realized my grandson had turned on the airplane mode and Mr. Crawford couldn't reach me

face was slightly red when she heard it was Luke who called. Then, she recalled what Rainie did Mr. Crawford says?" Luca

He just asked if you're in the villa. He didn't say anything and hung up the call when he found out that Ms. Rainie and you were baking in the kitchen." Aunt Neile expressed this in her own

her brows. Luke called just to find out if she was in the

looking for her or not,

**Luca could** not guess it and asked, "Aunt Neile, where did you put the icing sugar for the cookies? I need it."

"*The icing* sugar... Let me get it for you. The previous bag was finished, but I haven't been using it lately. That's why I didn't take a new one out." Aunt Neile put down the vacuum and marched into the kitchen. She took a bag of icing sugar out of the shelf.

Aunt Neile smiled when she saw that Rainie's hands were covered with flour. She said, "Way to go, Ms. **Rainie.**"

"Aunt Neile, I'll give you some cookies later." Rainie smiled and looked at Luca.

"*Sure.* Ms. Rainie's cookies must be good." Aunt Neile agreed with her, then she turned to look at Luca.

"Ms. Craw, I'm going out to continue with the house chores if there's nothing else that you need."

"**Okay.**" Luca opened the seal of the icing sugar pack and poured some on the scale. Then, she mixed it with the butter.

Rainie was standing beside her, **watching her.**

*Half* an hour later, the aroma of cookies filled the air.

Rainie carried the cookies on a plate and walked out of the kitchen. She said, "Aunt Neile, the cookies are done. Come on here and try *them.*"

**Aunt Neile** gave her a response, walked into the washroom to wash her hands, and came out again. She picked up one of the cookies and took a bite, "Ms. Rainie, this is so **good!**"

**Rainie** heard her compliment and gave her a cheerful smile. She said, "Ms. Luca made these. I was just helping out."

Luca walked out of the kitchen and heard Rainie saying that. She chimed in, "You helped to bake the cookies too, which means you made these cookies as well."

Luca took the scarf out and put it on her neck. Then, she put on her

her and asked with curiosity, "Ms. Luca, where are you

going to pick Lanie and Tommy up. Rainie, stay at home and be good," Luca reminded her like she was her

I'll listen to Aunt Neile."

smiled and nodded at Aunt Neile. Then, she went out and headed to her car to bring Lanie and Tommy back

later, Luca brought Lanie and Tommy

nose was so sensitive that he could smell the aroma of the cookies in the air right when he stepped into the villa. His eyes brightened up as he looked at Luca. "Ms. Luca, you baked

Rainie and I baked the cookies together. Well, you must be hungry. The cookies are in the kitchen. Go get some," said Luca as she hung their coats on the hanger. Then, she took off her coat and hung

sprinted to the kitchen, cheering happily.

the happiest moment of his day.

shook his head helplessly when he looked at how gluttonous Tommy was, then he turned to look at Luca.

## **Chapter 2178**

"Not many. Lanie, you should try." Tommy was worried Lanie would not allow him to eat the cookies, so he moved the plate toward him.

Lanie turned to look at Luca helplessly.

Luca could feel Lanie's gaze on her. She seemed to understand what he meant.

It was like Lanie was telling her, 'Look at your greedy little son...'

Luca cleared her throat and said, "Lanie, take a few of them. Leave the rest for tonight."

Lanie nodded and took three pieces of cookies.

Tommy was looking at them eagerly and asked, "Ms. Luca, can I take some too?"

Luca looked at the cookie crumbs on the corner of Tommy's lips, and the eager look on his face. It softened her heart.

She glanced at the plate, and she briefly knew how many cookies Tommy had eaten. If Tommy continued to eat the cookies, he would not be able to have dinner later, or he might be stuffed.

"Ms. Luca..." Tommy tried to act cute again when he saw Luca not saying anything. He wanted to win another chance to eat more cookies.

Luca thought that it should be fine to let Tommy have another one or two. However, she met Lanie's gaze when she was about to say something.



Although Lanie did not say anything, Luca felt that he was reminding herself not to spoil Tommy.

no choice but to make up her mind and reason with Tommy, "Tommy, you've eaten quite a few cookies. I know you're hungry now, but if you keep on eating, you won't be able to have your dinner. Don't forget I'm the one making your dinner

though Tommy wanted more, he compromised instantly once he heard Luca telling him that she would be preparing dinner. He said, "Okay, Ms. Luca. I won't

cookies were yummy, but Luca's home-cooked food tasted better.

placed the cookies on a higher table so that the kids would not be able to reach the cookies if they returned to the kitchen. Then, she said, "Okay. I'm going to prepare dinner now. Kids, head to the living room and wait for dinner."

and left together with Lanie.

Neile watched everything that happened and could not help but exclaim, "Ms. Craw, you sure know how to handle

turned around and looked at Aunt Neile.

used to work at Crawford Manor. Only Mr. Crawford could handle Young Master Tommy when he was greedy. The others aren't able to persuade him. He'd simply refuse to give in. Even if Old Master Crawford was there, he would think of a way or act cute to get what he wanted to eat," said Aunt Neile with a smile on her face. "You're the only person who can convince Tommy to stop eating other than Mr.

shook her head helplessly. She knew Tommy was greedy, but she did not expect Tommy to behave like this in front of the old

Crawford was the most dignified person in the Crawford family. She was helpless when she imagined Tommy pestering him and asking for snacks. There was nothing the old master could do even if that was the

all, it was hard to reject Tommy when he acted

that so?" Luca smiled, put on the apron, and began to make

*Luca had* learned from last night's experience, so she cooked fewer dishes today. It was to prevent the kids from eating too much and it affecting their health.

Luca accompanied the kids to watch their favorite cartoon with them after dinner. Then, she asked them to take a shower and get ready to go to bed. Luca only returned to her bedroom after she **completed everything**.

Luca had left her phone charging in the bedroom after she took a nap this afternoon. Then, she headed downstairs to bake some cookies with Rainie. She forgot she left her *phone upstairs*.

*Luca's* heart skipped a beat when she saw there were five missed calls. She tapped on the notification immediately and realized that all of them were from *Luke*.

She glanced at the time. It was when she woke up from her nap and went downstairs to bake the cookies with Rainie.

**Luca recalled** what Aunt Neile said to her. Could it be that Luke was unable to reach Luca, and that was why he called Aunt Neile before eventually calling the *villa's landline*?

It might be possible...

**Luca** glanced at the time. She did not return his call. Instead, she chose to explain in a message: [I'm sorry, Mr. Crawford. I left my phone charging in the bedroom. That's why I didn't get to answer *your call*.]

After the message was sent to him, Luca received a reply from Luke: [Alright.]

It was a simple response with just one word, and it made Luca feel a little upset.

Was he mad at her?

he busy with something and that was why he did not have time to reply to her with a longer

still hesitating if she should return his call at first, but she decided not to return his calls when she saw Luke's

should not have explained it to

a little depressed. She received a call from Nina when she was getting ready to take a shower and call it a night to get ready for tomorrow's

Nina, what's the matter?" Luca answered the call. She was a little confused. After all, Nina would not be calling her at this hour if nothing was

you in bed already?" Nina asked.

"Not yet. What's wrong?" Luca asked.

Nina hesitated. She needed to ask a favor from Luca, but it was hard for her to bring it

me if you need anything. I'll do whatever I can to help you." Luca could sense that Nina wanted to ask for her help, but it was difficult for her to say it since they had not known each other for long.

I'd like you to help me improve my health and wellbeing," said Nina.

suddenly felt nervous and quickly asked, "Why do you need me to improve your health? Are you feeling uncomfortable? Have you seen the doctor? Do you have any medical

could sense that Luca was worried about her on the phone. Luca was not putting on a show. She was truly worried about

## **Chapter 2179**

The expression on Luca's face was stern. She would agree to help Nina to improve her health so she could get pregnant if she was married and Percy and Nina wanted a baby. However, it was not the right time to do so now.

"Nina, it's not necessary to get the Mallory family's permission if Mr. Mallory wants to marry you. You can get married abroad, then come back to sign the marriage license. Your marriage will still be legalized here. It's the same," said Luca.

Getting married in A City would require a household registration permit. It might be difficult to get married if either side of the family disapproved of the marriage.

However, it was different in countries abroad.

Any couple could be legally married as long as the two of them had their passports and related documents.

"I know. I know that." Nina let out a sigh. "But I don't want to see Percy be caught in the middle between me and his family. Luca, they're his family members. If they disagree with us getting married but he insists on marrying me, they'll make things difficult for him in the future. That's why I came up with this idea..."

Nina was envious of Sue every time she met her children.

Not only did Nina want to break through the barriers between her and Percy by getting pregnant, but it was also about having a child. She wanted to be a mother.

"Mr. Mallory loves you. If he's made a firm decision, you should believe in him. Besides, he can protect you. On the other hand, if he has no thought about marrying you, it's risky for you to get pregnant. Nina, I'm not going to help you if there's a one percent chance that you might become a single mother," said Luca. She did not want Nina to suffer.

If Nina ended up being a single mother, the path ahead would not be easy for her.

Luca felt it was heartless to do so, but she did it for Nina's own good.

Moreover, even if Nina became pregnant with Percy's child, the Mallory family might not acknowledge that it was Percy's child. By the time she was truly pregnant, she had to be careful and guard herself against the Mallory family. Would it not be tougher for her?

Nina trusted her, and that was why she came to ask for her

refused to help her as she had a soft spot for Nina. Nina would get hurt if she helped

knew that if she chose not to help Nina, Nina could find a better physician to improve her health with Percy's help.

she knew that it was wrong to do so, there was nothing Luca could do to stop

out a sigh. What Luca said was reasonable, and she understood it too, but she had been in a dilemma for the whole day. She just wanted a baby.

had impulsively aborted the baby back then, and she did not take care of her health after the abortion. The doctor told her that she had to improve her health to get pregnant again. Otherwise, it would be difficult for the zygote to implant in the

always wanted a baby

not want to disappoint Percy. That was why she did not tell him about her plans. She thought of improving her health first, then she would tell Percy about it when she got pregnant.

understand everything you said, and I've been thinking it over..." Nina insisted on going ahead with her came looking for Luca, she thought Luca would agree to help her. However, if Luca ended up rejecting her, and she took Nina's matter

had no idea why Luca was against it.

talked to Mr. Mallory about this?" Luca suddenly asked. She refused to believe that Percy would agree to such an absurd decision.

*Nina fell* silent for a moment and decided not to lie to Luca. "I haven't told him about it. I'm thinking of getting pregnant first before I tell him."

"How about this? You talk to Mr. Mallory first. If he agrees with it, then I promise that I'll help you improve your health. I'll only agree to help you on the condition that he agrees with it," Luca suggested. Percy loved Nina, and he would never ask her to do something like this for his sake.

Nina's plan of secretly getting pregnant was just to give an explanation to the Mallory family and convince them to let Percy marry her. However, Percy would never agree with such a plan.

Percy would not take the risk of Nina getting hurt.

**Nina** reckoned that Percy was such a person too. That was why she did not discuss the matter **with him**.

**"Okay. Give** me some time..." Nina compromised and let out a **sigh**.

*"It's not* me who's giving you time. You're the one who's giving yourself some time to figure it out if this is something worth risking," replied **Luca**.

**"Alright, I** got it. Luca, sorry for bothering you. Have a good rest. Good night," Nina was about to hang up **the call**.

*Luca thought* of saying something to her, but the words that were on the tip of her tongue did not escape *her mouth*.

Nina was a grown-up. Everything she had been through in the past few years was just as much as what Luca had *gone through*.

**"Good night."** Luca hung up the call. She drew in a long breath and let out a deep sigh.

*Nina* was pregnant before this because of her, and she lost her baby because of Pierre, that bastard.

never experienced the difficulty of being pregnant for ten months, nor did she know what it felt like to be apart from her children.

Luca had gone through these before. That was why she did not want to see Nina taking the risk.

Percy was a good man whom Nina could trust her life with, it was not worth it for her to take such a

shook her head. In the end, this was Nina's decision. There was nothing she could do no matter how hard she tried to convince

stood up, put her phone back on the bedside table, and walked into the bathroom to clean herself up. Then, she lay down on her bed to

She had a dream that night.

that Nina was pregnant, but she resolutely left Percy's villa and told him that she wanted to draw a line between her and

her dream, Luca was a bystander. When she wanted to step forward to find out what happened, Nina did not see or hear her. She sat there alone,

she saw Nina dealing with her pregnancy alone. She gave birth to the child and raised the child all by depressed, and she was not as cheerful as she was before. She even hated everything in this world.

opened her eyes. She let out a deep sigh of relief when she realized it was just

Fortunately, it was just a dream...

## **Chapter 2180**

Aunt Neile said, "It was rare to see you sleep in today. That's why I didn't wake you up. I didn't expect you'd look so tired."

"I'll be fine after drinking a cup of coffee," Luca ate a mouthful of oatmeal. She thought she needed a cup of warm coffee to perk herself up a little.

"Let me get you some coffee," replied Aunt Neile as she walked into the kitchen.

The kids finished eating their breakfast. Tommy glanced at the time and said to Luca, "Ms. Luca, we're heading to school first."

"Okay. Be good and listen to your teacher," replied Luca. Usually, it was Uncle Zander who picked the kids up and sent them to school. When Luca was making her way down the stairs, she glanced outside the villa and saw Uncle Zander's car already outside and waiting for the kids.

"Ms. Luca, see you later." Rainie waved her hand at Luca and walked out of the dining room.

Luca was watching the kids as they left and disappeared at the entrance of the dining room. Only then did she shift her gaze and continue eating her breakfast.

She had to quickly finish her breakfast and head to the office.

Luca was planning to work this weekend, but Luke was away on a business trip. It ruined her plan. She canceled it and let the researchers on her team take the weekend off so that she could stay at home and take care of the kids.

After Luca finished eating her breakfast, Aunt Neile came out carrying a cup of sweet-smelling coffee in her hands.

"Ms. Luca, here's your coffee."

Luca looked at the cup of coffee in Aunt Neile's hands. She thought it would be rude to turn her down, so she said, "Aunt Neile, can you please pour the coffee into the thermos bottle? I'll bring it to the office."

Aunt Neile nodded and walked into the kitchen to look for the thermos bottle.

upstairs to get changed. She looked at herself in the mirror. She looked okay because she had enough sleep last night, but it was obvious that she was low-spirited and a little tired.

shook her head, picked up her phone, and glanced at

not continue to keep in touch with her after he replied to her with a simple response

smile swept across Luca's face. She truly did want to keep a distance between her and Luke, but now, she truly wanted Luke to be kinder to her

did not turn out the way

distant again when she was stuck in contradiction and indecisiveness.

her phone in her coat pocket and hurried downstairs.

stood at the landing of the stairs, holding the thermos bottle filled with the coffee. She handed the thermos bottle to Luca when she saw her coming down and said, "Ms. Luca, drive

will. Thank you, Aunt Neile." Luca walked out of the villa after taking the thermos bottle from her. She drove the car and headed in the direction of T

that Rhett was the only one there when she returned to the floor where the laboratory was located. The others had yet to

It seemed like it was still early.

"Good morning, Dr. Craw," Rhett stood up immediately when he saw Luca come **back**.

"**Good morning.**" Luca glanced at the time and looked at the breakfast on Rhett's desk. She nodded without saying anything. Then, she clocked in, turned around, and walked back to the office.

*Rhett looked* at her from behind, and he glanced at his breakfast. He sat down and continued eating his breakfast since Luca did not say anything.

**Luca's** phone rang when she just sat down on her chair in her *office*.

*Her* heart skipped a beat. She took her phone out and looked at it. It was Sue who was *calling her*.

Luca answered the call and greeted, "Hey, Sue, good *morning*."

"*Luca, have* you seen today's news?" Sue asked.

"I woke up late today. I didn't manage to watch the morning news broadcast. What happened?" Luca's panicked thoughts grew wild when she heard how anxious Sue sounded on the other end of the line. Could it be that something had happened to *Luke*?

Luca was flustered as she quickly turned on the computer. She wanted to find out today's news.

"Nina's in trouble," said Sue. There was nothing she could do to help Nina now. That was why she called Luca to see if she could help **her**.

hands trembled when she typed the news website in the search bar. Then, she clicked on the local news website and read

few media outlets reported about her today. They wrote horrible things about her. They're all about... Take a look at the articles. I don't know what I'm supposed to do now," replied Sue. She had no idea how to describe the contents of the news.

worry. Let me take a look at the situation first." Luca could sense the helplessness in Sue's

must be eager to help Nina, but Luca believed that Sue did not know how to help Nina this time. That was why she came looking for her in the first

saw the news after the website was done loading. She saw the headlines

The headlines themselves were terrible enough. Every single word taunted Nina for having a family background that was no match

clicked a link and scrolled down the page. Almost everything written on the news was the truth, but some of them distorted the

were false statements such as Nina being raped and getting

one was how Nina treated her mother,

news report thoroughly exposed everything that happened to Nina in the past and the present. Besides, the words carried an overtone of defamation and sarcasm. Whenever Percy was mentioned, the article that someone like Nina did not deserve Percy.

could not help but lose her temper when she saw the news. The person who wrote this news article seemed to have dug into Nina's background through someone close to Nina. Otherwise, how did that person manage to know so much about Nina's past?