Chapter 0046

Alexander drove the car while Maisie sat inside. She gazed out the window at the receding scenery.

Her eyes were dry and weary. However, she refused to let the tears well up in them.

Elio and June were clever. When they sensed something amiss, their tiny hearts would fill with worry.

Maisie took a moment to compose herself. Though her heart remained heavy, her delicate features regained their composure. Only the graceful tip of her nose remained slightly flushed.

"Alexander, I'm sorry for all the trouble today," Maisie said.

"Mais." Alexander turned his head to look at her. "He's El and Junie's father, right?"

Maisie lowered her gaze. Her response was heavy with melancholy. "
Yes, but he's not a worthy father."

Alexander's eyes deepened with understanding. With one hand on the wheel, he reached for a cartoon eye mask in the car and handed it to Maisie.

Maisie looked puzzled.

"Close your eyes and clear your mind. Take a few minutes to rest. You wouldn't want El and Junie to sense anything amiss, right?"

Alexander's voice was as warm as ever. His voice carried a gentle lilt in its fading cadence.

Maisie accepted the mask. Then, she glanced at Alexander and offered a faint smile. "Thank you."

The car came to a steady stop at the school gate.

Elio and Junee were guided by their respective teachers. They were among the last children remaining.

It was clear they were both getting anxious when they watched their peers get picked up by their parents one by one.

Maisie hurried over. When Elio and June spotted her, their unhappy expressions transformed into radiant smiles.

"Mommy!" Elio called out sweetly.

Witnessing this scene, Maisie's heart pricked sharply. She hurriedly gathered her children into her arms.

"Mommy, why are you so late? All the other kids have gone, so I thought you didn't want me and El anymore." June looked very upset.

"How could I not want my two darlings?" Maisie apologized softly, " I'm sorry, my darlings. I came late, and I apologize for that."

"Mommy, why is your elbow hurt?" June noticed Maisie's slightly red elbow. Her eyes were sharp, and he spoke in a caring tone.

"Mommy, why do you keep getting hurt lately? First, the fierce dog bit your mouth, and now this. Mommy, please be more careful."

Elio held Maisie's hand while chiding her with concern. He was also mimicking an adult's tone.

"It must hurt a lot, Mommy."

Tears welled up in June's eyes after she saw that Maisie was injured. She was unable to hold herself back.

"I'm fine. El, Junie, don't cry. Please don't cry. I'm okay. It's just a small scrape. I'll put some ointment on it when we get home, okay?" Maisie hurriedly comforted her children.

"Okay," they both replied in unison.

"Bit by a fierce dog? Mais, you were bitten by a dog?"

Alexander went to the pharmacy after parking the car. He overheard that Maisie was bitten by a dog when he walked closer. His entire demeanor tensed up as he stared at her.

Maisie was speechless. She instinctively bit her lip, and a touch of embarrassment crossed her delicate face.

"It's a long story. It's in the past now. I'm fine." Maisie wanted to change the topic and escape the conversation quickly.

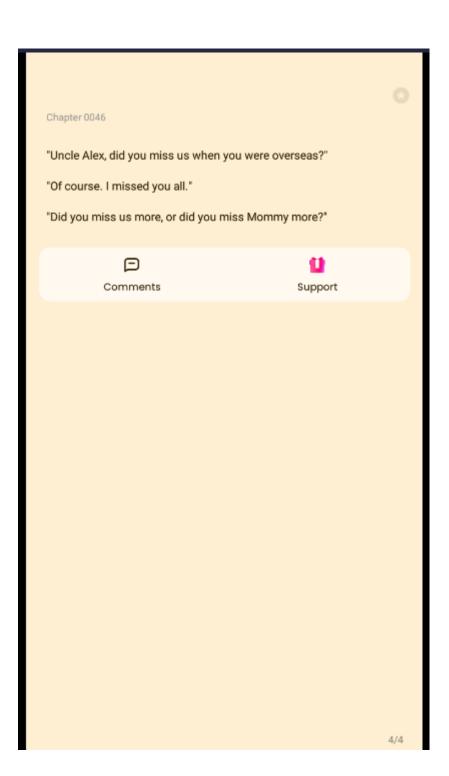
Alexander noted Maisie's evasive gaze and vague responses. He suddenly felt puzzled as he wondered what dog could bite someone's mouth.

"Hello, Uncle Alex," Elio and June greeted politely upon seeing Alexander.

"Why did you come back to Yuvaran?" Elio inquired.

Alexander crouched down and gently ruffled Elio and June's hair.

His handsome face was adorned with a warm smile. "I haven't seen you guys in a long time, so I returned. I see you two have grown taller.



Maisie was caught off guard by this question. At first, she had been quietly observing. Her sweet smile froze on her face upon hearing that question.

"Junie ..." She wondered what kind of question that was.

Maisie shot a pointed look at June. But to her surprise, June was also shooting looks in her direction.

This was getting stranger by the second.

Alexander chuckled softly. His gentle and sincere voice broke the tension.

"I missed all of you."

Maisie forced a laugh and quickly changed the subject. "Let's talk in the car. El, Junie—"

"Hold on a second." Alexander raised his hand and caught Maisie's wrist

The sudden warmth from his touch startled Maisie, who was about to get into the car.

She turned back to look at him. Her beautiful amber eyes were filled with confusion. "What's wrong?"

Alexander gestured toward the bottle of medicine in his hand. His voice was gentle. "Let me apply the ointment on your injury first."

Maisie glanced around. "Here?"

"Yeah. I'm sure you won't do it properly once I'm gone," he replied softly.

Maisie chuckled awkwardly. "I don't think it's necessary. It's just a minor injury. It'll heal on its own."

"What do you mean? Mommy, you'll be busy with work as soon as you get home. You'll definitely forget to apply the ointment," Elio said sternly.

"That's right, Mommy. You have to apply the ointment. Uncle Alex, could you please help our mommy? We're all watching you," June agreed seriously.

Maisie couldn't help but laugh at her children's severe tones.

Alexander poured some ointment into his palm. "Mais, the kids are more sensible than you."

"I appreciate your help, Alexander," Maisie said with a helpless smile.

"It's alright. It might sting a bit, so bear with it," he said.

His warm palm covered her fair wrist while his other hand gently cupped her elbow.

He feared causing her pain, so he massaged her with extra care and gentleness.

The surroundings were silent as if only the sound of the wind existed.

Maisie instinctively pulled her hand back. She did this not because it hurt, but because she felt oddly awkward.

"Mais."

"Yeah?"

Alexander lifted his head, his warm eyes looking stern as he gazed at her

He sighed softly. "You need to learn to love yourself."

Maisie's eyelashes trembled slightly.

After getting her injury tended, Maisie suddenly remembered that she had planned to invite Alexander for dinner today.

However, she couldn't cook with an injured elbow. So, she suggested, "Let's go out to eat. I'll treat you to dinner, just like I promised."

Alexander knew of Maisie's reluctance to owe people favors. He understood that she would feel very uneasy if he didn't let her pay tonight. "Alright."

Alexander drove them over after they chose a restaurant.

"Oh, by the way, I haven't asked you yet. Why did you suddenly come back to Yuvaran? Weren't you planning to continue your career abroad?" Maisie inquired.

Alexander's handsome face still carried a gentle smile. He exuded a gentlemanly vibe. "Well, that was the plan. But there are important people in Yuvaran that I missed."

Maisie looked curious. "So, you came back for someone you love?"

"Yeah." Alexander chuckled softly, his eyes filled with affection.

However, Maisie was preoccupied with her thoughts and didn't pay

much attention.

After dinner, Alexander escorted Maisie and her children home.

"Mommy, do you like Uncle Alex or Uncle Jon?" Elio and June leaned against Maisie, one on each side.

Maisie had initially planned to tell them a bedtime story, but this question caught her off guard.

"I think both Uncle Alex and Uncle Jon are good," Elio piped up.

"But I like Uncle Alex more. He cares a lot about Mommy, while Uncle Jon always looks grumpy," June said.

Elio took over the topic. "Anyway, they both like Mommy. Mommy, who do you like?"



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