

### 29: I'll Make You Regret It

Caitlin's slap never landed on Howard's face. Instead, as he raised his small, defiant face to the angry woman, his tears welled up when he spotted Caitlin.

His mom was here! Mom was here!

The sight of Caitlin gave him a surge of hope, but it also unleashed the pent-up sadness he had been holding inside.

"Who are you? Why are you grabbing me?" snapped Mrs. Gray, struggling to pull her wrist free.

Caitlin had arrived late due to traffic but never expected to witness such a scene. Seeing her son being insulted and nearly struck, a storm of rage erupted in her heart.

This woman and her child dared to bully her son? Fine. They would soon learn the consequences of crossing Caitlin.

"So, you want to hit my son? Let's see who dares lay a hand on him!" Caitlin's cold, cutting glare made Mrs. Gray flinch. With one sharp motion, she shoved the woman's hand away and shielded Howard behind her.

Mrs. Gray steadied herself, fury bubbling up. "What do you mean, 'your son'? Who do you think you are, showing up out of nowhere and claiming this child as yours?"

Turning to Yasmin, she demanded, "Yasmin, who is this woman?"

"She's Mr. Vanderbilt's contract bride. Her name's Caitlin," Yasmin replied with a hint of disdain.

"Oh, so \*you're\* the Vanderbilt family's new contract bride?" Mrs. Gray sneered, her voice dripping with contempt. "And here I thought this little

brat's real mother had finally shown up. Turns out it's just a stepmom. Who do you think you are?"

Caitlin ignored the taunts about her identity. Her concern lay solely with Howard. Fixing a steely glare on Mrs. Gray, she said coldly, "Apologize to my son."

"Apologize? Are you joking?" Mrs. Gray scoffed. "Take a good look at what your little monster did to my son's face. He scratched him up so badly! What if his face is scarred for life? Can you afford the damages?"

Mrs. Gray's raised voice attracted the attention of nearby parents, who began murmuring among themselves.

"You and your son were the ones who insulted and provoked my child first. He defended himself, which was entirely justified. Instead of disciplining your son, you encourage his behavior. Apologize. You both have one minute, or you'll face the consequences."

Mrs. Gray laughed mockingly. "Consequences? You think I'm scared of you? Do you even know who I am? You're way out of your league, sweetheart. I'm not apologizing, so what are you going to do about it?"

Caitlin's eyes turned icy. "Good. Remember, you asked for this."

She turned to Quincy. "Take Howard outside."

Quincy gently coaxed Howard away, and Caitlin gave her son a reassuring nod. Only after Howard was safely out of sight did Caitlin turn her attention back to Mrs. Gray.

"I gave you two chances. You didn't take them. Don't blame me for what happens next," Caitlin said.

Before Mrs. Gray could respond, Caitlin's hand flew through the air.

**\*\*SMACK!\*\***

The crisp sound of the slap echoed, silencing everyone around them. Even Yasmin froze in shock, unable to believe what she had just witnessed. Caitlin had actually slapped Mrs. Gray!

"You dare lay a hand on me? Do you know who I am?" Mrs. Gray sputtered, her voice trembling with disbelief.

Caitlin didn't care who she was. Without hesitation, she slapped her again.

**\*\*SMACK! SMACK!\*\***

Mrs. Gray stumbled backward, her hair disheveled, and a thin line of blood appeared at the corner of her mouth.

"How dare you? You crazy woman!" Mrs. Gray shrieked.

But Caitlin wasn't done. She delivered another set of vicious slaps.

**\*\*SMACK! SMACK! SMACK!\*\***

Then, grabbing Mrs. Gray by the hair, Caitlin hissed, "Listen closely. If you ever bully my son again, I'll make you regret the day you were born. You have until noon tomorrow to come to the Vanderbilt estate and apologize, or I'll destroy you."

With a final shove, Caitlin sent Mrs. Gray sprawling against a nearby wall. The woman crumpled to the ground, clutching her side in pain and unable to get up.

The parents watching the scene were too stunned to intervene. Caitlin's aura radiated a deadly fury that left no room for doubt — this was not a woman to cross.

Yasmin, who had been secretly filming the altercation, felt a flicker of smug satisfaction. If the Vanderbilt family saw this footage, they'd surely turn against Caitlin.

But as Caitlin turned and locked eyes with her, Yasmin felt a chill run down her spine. Quickly, she lowered her phone, trying to hide it.

Caitlin stalked toward her. "You stood by and watched my son being bullied. What good are you as a nanny?"

Without waiting for an answer, Caitlin slapped Yasmin twice, leaving the woman stunned and speechless.

With Caitlin's fiery energy filling the air, no one dared stop her as she strode away.

Once she returned to the car, Caitlin turned to Howard and said softly, "I'm so sorry, Howard. I was late. I should've been here sooner."

Howard didn't need her apology. His mom showing up to protect him was all he needed. He threw himself into her arms, holding her tightly.

Caitlin hugged him back, her heart aching. She promised him, "No one will ever hurt you again. Mom will always protect you."

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Later, after treating Howard to new clothes and a KFC meal to lift his spirits, Caitlin returned to the Vanderbilt estate. As she entered with her son, Marcus greeted her at the door.

"Thank goodness you're back, ma'am," Marcus said.

"What's going on?" Caitlin asked.

"Please come inside."

Inside the estate's main hall, the atmosphere was tense. Several people were seated, including Yasmin, who sat with an ice pack pressed to her swollen cheek.

"Beatrice, the lady of the house, is here," Marcus announced.

All eyes turned to Caitlin. She set Howard down, and Grace wasted no time accusing her.

"Caitlin, what's wrong with you? Why would you hit Yasmin?"

"So what if I did?" Caitlin replied icily, her gaze piercing.

Yasmin, clutching her face dramatically, wailed, "Caitlin, I didn't even do anything to you! You attacked me out of nowhere! Look at my face—it's still swollen!"

"Oh? Did I hit you by mistake? Or perhaps not hard enough?" Caitlin said with a cold smirk.

"You're unbearable!" Yasmin screeched, tears streaming down her face as if she were the victim.

Beatrice raised her hand, signaling for quiet. "Enough. Caitlin, tell me what happened. Why did you hit her?"



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