

# Her Own Flesh and Blood

The closer she got, the more her heart ached. The pain in her heart didn't lie.

This was her son!

Her own flesh and blood!

"The little mute is bleeding! He's bleeding!"

"Let's run!"

The two boys who had caused trouble were about to flee, but Caitlin stepped forward, blocking their way, and snapped, "Stop right there!"

The two chubby boys froze, staring at Caitlin in surprise. One of them raised his face defiantly and asked, "Who are you? Why are you stopping us?"

"Who told you to bully him?" Caitlin pointed to the boy lying on the ground.

"We didn't bully him!" The two chubby boys denied it.

"I saw it with my own eyes, and you're still denying it? Look at him now! Covered in mud, his nose bleeding. You think that wasn't you?"

Caitlin grabbed the two chubby boys by the ears, forcing them to turn and face the boy on the ground.

Howard got up from the ground, looking up at the strange woman with wide, curious eyes.

The sudden appearance of the woman made him momentarily forget his anger and humiliation.

The two chubby boys cried out in pain, but Caitlin harshly commanded, "Apologize to him! Do you hear me?"

The chubby boys struggled free, refusing to apologize. "We won't apologize! What are you going to do about it?"

"Yeah, who are you, anyway? Mind your own business!"

Seeing their brazen defiance, Caitlin's anger flared. She raised her hand and slapped each of the boys across the face.

Both of them were struck twice. Normally, they were used to running wild, but being suddenly slapped left them stunned. Then, they both burst into loud sobs.

"Stop crying! Do you hear me? Apologize to him! Or I'll hit you again!"

Terrified by Caitlin's threat, the two chubby boys reluctantly turned to the smaller boy and muttered, "Sorry..."

Howard blinked his large, curious eyes, even more intrigued.

Who was this woman?

Why was she helping him?

The chubby boys tried to run, but Caitlin grabbed their collars again and warned them, "Listen up, both of you! From now on, you are not allowed to bully him!"

"And he's not some kid without a mother! If anyone dares call him a mute or an orphan again, I'll make sure you regret it!"

The two chubby boys were scared stiff, not daring to say another word. Only after Caitlin released them did they run off crying.

Turning to the little boy on the ground, Caitlin's eyes filled with tears, and her heart broke.

This was her son!

He was almost five years old, but he had never experienced a single day of a mother's love!

Thinking about it made Caitlin's heart ache even more.

The saying "A child without a mother is like grass" was painfully true.

Even though he lived in a wealthy family, he still couldn't avoid being bullied, especially when his father couldn't protect him.

Now that she had finally found her son, Caitlin wasn't sure how to introduce herself to him. She was afraid of scaring him, so she didn't immediately tell him she was his mother.

Caitlin knelt down, holding back her tears, and asked, "You're Howard, right? Does it hurt? Let me clean it for you, okay?"

Caitlin pulled out a handkerchief, intending to wipe the blood from his nose, but the little boy furrowed his brow, his gaze cold as he swatted her hand away, refusing to let her touch him.

He wiped his nose with his sleeve, lifting his chin defiantly, his eyes saying that he was a man and a little blood was nothing.

So young, yet so strong. It broke Caitlin's heart.

Holding back her tears, she smiled and praised him, "Howard, you were very brave just now. Well done! Auntie is proud of you!"

Caitlin gave him a thumbs up, but Howard didn't accept her praise. He gave her a cold glance and walked right past her.

Howard was aloof and didn't like interacting with others. Even though this woman had helped him, he didn't want to say much to her.

In just a few minutes, Caitlin could see that her son was proud and cold, very much like his stubborn father.

Caitlin caught up to him. "Howard, I came here to find you. Don't you want to know who I am?"

Howard tilted his little head, giving her a sidelong glance before walking even faster, as if she were a kidnapper.

Watching his stubborn, proud little back, Caitlin felt helpless. She called out, "Howard, do people call you a little bastard?"

Hearing this, Howard stopped in his tracks. When he turned around, his small face was full of indignation.

Her words had hit a nerve!

Like an angry little tiger, he charged at Caitlin, headbutting her in the leg.

If he could speak, he would tell her how much he hated being called a motherless child or a bastard!

He wasn't a bastard!

Caitlin stumbled back two steps before steadying herself. She grabbed his little wrist and bent down, saying, "I didn't mean to upset you. I just want to tell you that you're not a bastard. You have a mother!"

"Hmph..."

Howard snorted, glancing at her with cold disdain. He knew he had a mother, but he didn't know where she was.

"Auntie is your mother. You are my son. Mommy is back! From now on, Mommy will protect you, okay?"

Caitlin's words left Howard stunned for a long time. His big, black eyes stared at her, as if trying to see through her, to figure out if she was telling the truth.

He couldn't believe it. Was she really his mother?

His doubtful little eyes scanned her again and again, shifting from shock to suspicion, then to hurt and anger.

Because he didn't have a mother, his brothers bullied him, his classmates teased him, and even the adults whispered behind his back, calling him abandoned or claiming his father had picked him up from somewhere.

He hated his mother for abandoning him!

But he also longed for a mother. Every day, he wished his mother would come back for him.

Now, this beautiful woman was telling him she was his mother, but he couldn't believe it.

For the first time, Howard's eyes filled with tears. He suddenly pushed her away and ran off, crying.

"Howard... Howard..."

Caitlin hurried after him, finally finding him hiding in a small cave in the garden's rockery.

He was curled up in the small cave, hugging his knees, letting his tears and blood mix and drip down, refusing to come out.

Caitlin's heart ached so much. In front of others, her son acted like a little hedgehog, sharp and defensive, but when he was alone, he was like a wounded little animal, hiding away in loneliness.

"Howard, I'm sorry. Mommy should have come back to find you sooner.

"When I gave birth to you and left you with your daddy, I had my reasons for leaving. But believe me, I never abandoned you.

"Howard, I missed you so much. All these years, I've dreamed of you, and there hasn't been a single day I didn't think about you.

"I came back this time to find you, and I never want to be separated from you again."

Caitlin's heart broke as she cried, her gaze full of love for her son. "Howard, my sweet boy, come to Mommy, will you?"