## 003

MARA

It's been a week since I saw Grandpa. I missed him despite the fact he only stayed with me for three weeks. I missed the funny thing he did whenever he couldn't remember me. Every time I stepped inside the door, he would ask who I was, and then he will stay in the corner, with his eyes following me as if I would attack him any chance I had.

I would chuckle, stealing glances at him once in a while, and, at the same time, sad because I knew the reason why he was acting like that. It was the woman that beat him. He was traumatized and scared that he thought I would hurt him like that woman did. That's why he stayed in one corner for over an hour until he remembered me.

I wondered if he was like this in his home whenever that woman was around—just imagining him crying while the woman beating and pulling his hair angered me. I always let him be and waited until he remembered who I was, and once he did, he would

rush to me and hug me and say welcome home, pretty good lady. I'm sorry I don't remember you soon." "It's okay, Grandpa. I always replied, and he would kiss my cheek and then follow me

around. When I was cooking, he would stand beside me while watching me cook; when I

was cleaning, he would help me by fixing the bed or sweeping the floor; and when I was doing laundry, he would help me hang the clothes. I felt so happy with him beside me as if I had a real family. I don't feel alone. He would always say good night and good morning and kiss my cheek. He is so sweet and caring, and I dreamed of having a grandpa like that, but now he wasn't here. I don't even

know where he is. I felt so sad and lonely like one of my family members had died. I cried at night sometimes. I missed him.

"Mara, table four." My manager called out, Snapping me out of my thoughts. I hurried, took the food tray, and brought it to table four; that man and woman occupied us. "Hello sir, Ma'am, here 's your order." I carefully place the food in front of them, but when I

look up, I meet eyes with the person I less expected to see. "Jared?" I gasped.

"Babe! Do you know her?" The woman asked.

"No, I don't know someone working as a waitress. Sorry, Miss, you mistook me for someone

else." He said and put his arms around the woman's shoulder, glaring at me. I balled my fist, holding my tears. So this is the reason why I couldn't contact him because he already had

someone else and was embarrassed to be linked to a waitress like me. This bastard, after he cheated on me, there's no shame on his body. I stormed away from their table and went to the ladies' room. Even though he cheated on me, I couldn't bear humiliating him. I still love him. Four years of being with him are not easy to forget, and it I pains me to think that he disregards those four years of us being together.

me whenever I'm already giving up. He always helped me up again, and it didn't cross my mind that he would throw everything after a few months that he was away. That's how easily he replaced me.

surprised when someone grabbed my wrist. I looked up and saw Jared. I grit my teeth and

He was the only person closer as a family to me. He is my straight and the wall that supports

yank my hand away, but he holds it again. "We need to talk." He said and dragged me out of the diner through the back door. He led me to the bench where I met Grandpa, which only reminded me of him.

I wiped the tears that rolled down my face and stepped out of the bathroom, but I was

here? Why you didn't tell me?" Tell you? How can I tell you when you change your number? Wow! I planned to surprise you, but you surprised me instead."

He let go of my wrist and then faced me, furious. "Why are you here? When did you come

hiding my pain. "The same sweet words you told me before," I said, full of sarcasm. "Okay, at least I find out

grow old with. " my heart felt like being stabbed by every word that left his lips. I chuckled,

"Let's end our relationship. I found someone I truly love, and she's the woman I want to

who you are before it's too late. Go back to your woman. " Remember this, Mara, in this city; we are strangers. We don't know each other." He started. His words, like a knife, were driven into my heart. " No one will know that we know each

other. You'll ruin my reputation if they know I have a relationship with a waitress before." "Ouch! That hurt—this bastard. I wanted to claw his eyes that were glaring at me and shove them to his throat. I'm not a violent woman, I always avoid confrontation, but this guy was

waking up the devil inside me.

from where I work." I laughed.

"Don't worry. I don't want myself to be associated with the like of you as well." I angrily replied. I wanted to slap and pull his hair, but I was scared that if I did that, I might lose my job.

"What do you mean by that? Are you mocking me? Me?" He laughs, running his eyes from

my head to my toes with his mocking stare. " I am the head of the finance department of that

building. You see that huge building across the street. I am working there. I am respected and admired by my coworkers, and you, a waitress mocking me?" He laughed. "Stay away from me where I couldn't see you. I want you to find another workplace away

"You're making me laugh. Who do you think you are to order me? You are no one to me, so you don't have the right to tell me what to do. Suppose you want us to treat each other as strangers, fine. I will treat you like an invisible bastard Jared.

approaching. "Good, pretty lady.". Jared throws a last warning glare at me, and then he storms back inside the diner. I slumped on the ground crying. How could he do this to me? I thought he loved

me, but he only met a city girl and he already everything about us.

"You!" He grabbed my wrist harshly but quickly let me go when we heard footsteps

"Good, pretty lady. What happened? Why are you crying? Grandpa!" I cried and hugged him tightly. "I just missed you," I whispered.

"I missed you too. I've been asking Jay Jay to bring me to see you, but he declined, so I ran away so that I could see you." He grinned.

"What? you run away again?" He nodded his head. "Grandpa!" I pretended that I was angry while wiping my tears. Jared, I hate you. How could you do this to me? "I just missed you so much." He lowers his head sadly.

"No, I'm just wandering earlier because I forgot why I left the house, and then I felt hungry.

That's when I remembered why I left the house in the first place to see you; I remember you gave me food, then I remembered this place, so I came here." He grinned.

'I'm not mad, but please don't do this again. Have you eaten?"

Don't go anywhere. Wait until I finish my work. You might get lost if you leave." I hope Jared wasn't there anymore. "Okay! He grinned."

We went inside the diner, and I guided him to the table in the corner, away from other

"Come on. Let's get inside. I still have work to do. I buy food for you, and you eat inside.

"Sorry, it won't happen again."

"John, can I have a carbonara with garlic bread and a large orange juice? I'll pay for it. I give

it to Grandpa." He didn't reply, but I know he heard me. I brought the food to table five, and

I was surprised to see the man with a poker face and one of his companions the last time.

"Mara, where have you been? Can't you see we are busy?" John scolded me.

"Wait for me here. I buy food for you." He nodded, smiling. I smiled and went to the cook.

"Here's your food, sir. Enjoy your meals." The other guy smiled while looking at me with a blank face. I bowed my head and went back to John, and I smiled to see the food I ordered

brought it to Grandpa.

customers, and let him settle there.

"Table five." He said and handed me the tray.

was already ready. I paid for it after thanking him and

After he finished his food, he stood up and looked around him, disoriented. I quickly rushed to him. "Grandpa, what's wrong?" I asked worriedly. "Where I am, and who are you?" He asked, looking around.

"Grandpa, can you sit down first? I am good, pretty lady, remember?"

head. I patted his head and continued my work with my eyes. Keep glancing at Grandpa.

"Grandpa, here's your food. Eat it all, okay? And don't leave." He smiled and nodded his

"Mara, table six," John called. Luckily, my manager wasn't in the dining area, or my ears would explode with his annoying voice. "Grandpa, don't leave. Stay here, okay? I still have work. Please stay okay." I let out a sigh

table six. I looked at Grandpa, and I gasped when the man with a poker face was trying to lead him out of the diner. I quickly ran to them and pushed him away. "What do you think you are doing?" I glared at him and wrapped my arms around Grandpa.

"Good pretty lady, this man, I don't know him. I told him I didn't want to go, but he forced

"I'm his granddaughter, and who do you think you are? I could sue you for kidnapping." For the first time, the man laughs, but it doesn't reach his eyes.

of relief when he nodded his head. I ran to John and took the tray of food, and brought it to

"Who are you?" The man asked, glaring at me.

"Sue me? Do you know who I am? I am his grandson.

"Don't cry, Grandpa. I won't let him take you." I cooed, wiping his tears.

me." Grandpa cried with his arms wrapped around me.

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