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Mavis was completely bewildered by this. Her son hadn't seen her in five years, and she was wearing a mask. How did he recognize her at first glance? As she stood there stunned, Alistair clung to her and whined, "Mommy, are you here to take me to heaven?"

Mavis didn't know what to say.

It seemed that Alistair wasn't thinking clearly at the moment; it was just a coincidence or a guess.

She rubbed his soft little head and spoke softly, "Alistair, I'm a nurse from the hospital here to check your health. Can I finish the exam first?"

Alistair sniffled and pouted his lips as he shook his head. "You're not a nurse; you're my mother! You look exactly like my Mommy in the wedding photo with Daddy! I can never forget what you look like!"

Did Anthony show their son their marriage certificate? He must have seen Mavis's face more than once for their son to remember so well.

Was it guilt? They got married without even having a wedding or taking wedding photos. Anthony probably only had one photo of Mavis on their marriage certificate.

"Mommy, I miss you so much! Daddy misses you too! Every year on my birthday, Daddy takes me to the temple to kowtow before your picture and tells me how beautiful of a place you went but couldn't come back from yet because I'm not grown up enough yet... I really want to grow up quickly!"

As he spoke again with tears in his eyes as if he were dreaming out loud, Mavis stiffened all over because of what he said and couldn't snap out of it for quite some time.

Ring~

It was Lyra's message alerting her about time constraints so that Paloma or Rebecca wouldn't see them together.

She immediately snapped out of her complex thoughts and continued measuring Alistair's blood pressure while casually asking him about how Anthony treated him these past few years.

At the mention of Anthony, Alistair pouted even more, "Daddy... he doesn't love me anymore..."

Thinking about this made him sad again as he buried himself into Mavis' arms while crying softly.

This also made Mavis teary-eyed as she asked gently, "Why do you think that way? Does your father treat you badly usually?"

“He’s super mean!”

Alistair let out a sob, as if he had found a shoulder to cry on. His voice was soft and whiny as he complained, “Daddy never picks me up from school. He promised to take me to the amusement park, but then he left me there and went back to work.”

“He likes Spencer more than me. Every time he talks about him, it’s all praise. He says I’m stupid and dumb, but Daddy never praises me...”

He sat up in anger and then leaned on Mavis’ lap again. He grabbed her hand and placed it on his little butt while vividly describing the situation, “I get scolded all the time for not listening or behaving well, then Daddy... smack! Smack! Smacks me hard!”

“Waaahh... It hurts so much...”

He rested his head on Mavis’ lap while crying uncontrollably. Tears kept streaming down his beautiful blue eyes as if trying to express all of his sorrows from these past few years. “I don’t want Daddy anymore...”

Mavis listened to him cry with a broken heart.

If it weren’t for this huge injustice that her son suffered through, how could he have been hurt like this? She should have known that Anthony didn’t love her; how could she expect him to love their son?

She felt an urge deep inside her heart – she wanted nothing more than to take her son away from Crana immediately.

But now was not the best time.

If he was taken away from the hospital right now, they would be monitored constantly by the Callahan family. They would be caught before even reaching the airport.

She couldn’t make any rash decisions at this point; she held onto her son tightly instead – expressing five years worth of longing without saying a word.

“It’s okay if he doesn’t love you because there are many people who do love you in this world – your mother, great-grandmother... they all love you.”

But... but what he really wanted was his daddy’s love!

Alistair became increasingly helpless with each passing thought until finally letting out an anguished plea, “Mommy, can we go together into heaven?

Maybe when we’re there, I won’t feel sad anymore...”

Mavis’ heart broke even further upon hearing those words just as Lyra called again,

[Anthony is at the hospital now; he has arrived at the parking lot already so please come out quickly.]

Mavis immediately became nervous once again; she had no choice but let go of Alistair who looked extremely wronged by everything that happened.

“Mommy, you don’t want me either?”

Her heart twisted painfully upon hearing those words yet still managed

comfort him by rubbing his tear-stained face gently.

“I’ll come back tomorrow. I’ll tell you stories and play with you too! Will that make you happy?”

“You promise?”

“I promise – pinky swear! And remember only puppies lie!”

Alistair finally believed in what Mavis said after hearing about puppies lying, which made him release his grip on Mavis, allowing himself rest back onto bed once more.

She quickly organized the medical supplies and carried the tray out of the room. Just as she stepped out, she heard a ding from the elevator nearby. Anthony’s face was cold and he wore a well-tailored navy blue suit. He walked out of the elevator with casual steps. Five years had passed, but it seemed like nothing had changed for him except for his age increasing. His face was still extraordinarily handsome, making it hard to look away.

But Mavis didn’t want to stare too long. She quickly lowered her head and walked in another direction away from Anthony. The distance between them was only ten meters, but it felt like they were separated by an ocean of unfamiliarity.

There weren’t many people in the corridor, only three or four nurses and doctors passing by occasionally. Anthony noticed that one nurse came out of his son’s room, thinking that something might be wrong with his son, so he looked up at her and said, “Miss, wait a minute.”

The corridor wasn’t crowded at all, but Mavis didn’t stop walking as if she hadn’t heard anything; instead she quickened her pace.

Anthony stared at her slender figure from behind and felt a sense of familiarity rising in his heart. Despite most of her blonde hair being covered by a nurse’s cap, he felt uneasy about something not being right here.

He frowned slightly and spoke in a low voice, “Stop.”

Mavis tightened her grip on the medical tray in hand; feeling nervousness creeping up into every cell of her body – how could things go wrong this fast? Stopping now would mean exposing herself before Anthony; therefore she took a gamble on running away as fast as possible instead.

Anthony immediately chased after her down the hallway where they ran for about one minute without Mavis looking back once. Finally, she disappeared around another corner, leaving Anthony behind without any trace except for an empty hallway ahead.

The entire hallway was empty except for safety exits which could hide someone easily enough, so Anthony’s expression became serious while pushing open one such door. Suddenly, Lyra elegantly emerged from inside surprising both parties equally upon seeing each other there unexpectedly.

“What are you doing here?”

“What are you doing here?”

They both asked almost simultaneously while looking surprised at each other’s presence there together alone like this, which made Lyra smile first before explaining herself,

“I went upstairs to see Spencer. Since it’s only one floor anyway, I thought taking stairs would be faster than waiting for an elevator... And what about you?”

Anthony relaxed his previously tense eyebrows slightly, while casually explaining himself too.

“I’m just like you. I hate waiting around so I decided to take safety exit upstairs to check on Spencer myself.”

“Let’s wait until later then,” said Lyra closing safety door behind them both before continuing, “He just fell asleep again so if we wake him up now, he’ll probably get cranky.”

Anthony stared at her as she closed the door, his jawline stiffening and his expression becoming serious.

As the door was about to shut, he forcefully reached out and held it open. “I just saw a suspicious nurse come out of Alistair’s room. I called out to her and she ran away nervously. I’m worried that she might be working with those kidnappers who are seeking revenge.”

Lyra looked surprised. “What? These people are so brazen that they dare to come here despite the hospital’s security measures? Did you catch her?”

“No,” Anthony replied, his eyes narrowing in suspicion. “I suspect that she is hiding behind this safety corridor door right now. What do you think, Lyra?”

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Lyra’s smile disappeared as she quickly understood what he meant. “Are you suspecting that I have something to do with those kidnappers?”

“I’m not saying that, Lyra. How could you possibly do such a thing? But that woman is really suspicious, and I have to investigate.”

Lyra stepped aside tactfully. “Go ahead and investigate, but I just came from the secure passage and didn’t see any suspicious nurses. Maybe they ran in another direction.”

“Let’s see if there are any suspicious people around here,” he said as he forcefully pushed open the door and entered the secure passage. There was no one behind the door, but someone had left a pair of small white shoes on the ground.

The upper and lower floors of the secure passage were quiet without any sound.

Anthony's gaze fell on those shoes; his face was stern and expressionless. Lyra noticed his gaze, bent down to pick up those shoes slowly for inspection. The soles were clean like new without any dirt or mud stains.

Lyra smiled, "Maybe it was some nurse who finished her shift early for a date or something? That's why she left her old shoes here for new ones."

"It does seem too new," he agreed half-heartedly, unsure if it was suspicious or not.

There were no cameras in the secure passage either; everything was silent without movement. Anthony relaxed his serious expression slightly, "Maybe I've been too sensitive lately because of Alistair and Spencer's recent incident. Everything seems off."

Lyra sighed along with him, "Don't be overly nervous. Spend more time caring about Alistair instead. He has been feeling down these past few days until Momo cheers him up with laughter."

When Alistair was mentioned again, Anthony lowered his blue eyes sadly while smiling at Lyra, "He doesn't want to see me much these days; maybe he needs some time alone before forgiving me again... Why don't you go check on him instead?"

In short, this matter had something to do with her family member Spencer being involved in it all – Lyra didn't say anything else after nodding her head before leaving towards Alistair's room direction.

Anthony watched her back as she walked away while standing still motionlessly – looking through her towards another person...

That woman from earlier... She really looked like someone familiar... And her hair color...

But wasn't it just an illusion?

How could someone who passed away five years ago appear in this hospital? His brows furrowed deeply as he thought more about this situation – taking out his phone from his pocket then dialing Kane's number immediately afterwards.

"Check the surveillance video on the fourth floor of the hospital ward, especially the hallway next to Alistair's room. Anyone who enters or exits Alistair's room must confirm their identity," Anthony ordered.

"Understood, Mr. Callahan," came the reply.

Anthony thought back to the figure he had just seen. "Also, check the hospital staff list for a female nurse around 170cm tall with a slim build and blonde hair."

"Yes, sir."

With his orders given, he turned and headed towards Alistair's room. Through

the small window in the door, he could see Lyra sitting beside Alistair chatting with Molly.

A rare smile graced Alistair's face; his emotions seemed more stable after two days. Anthony felt some tension release from his chest and made his way to a smoking area at end of corridor.

Meanwhile, Mavis had already run barefoot into Hospital's underground parking lot and got into her black car that she arrived in earlier. Thanks to Lyra who managed to stall Anthony for a while that gave her an opportunity to escape through a safe passage without being caught by him.

Quickly changing out of her nurse uniform and donning a mask and hat as disguise, she sent Lyra a message, "Thank you for being there for me when I needed it most."

Lyra received this anonymous text message on her phone while sitting in Alistair's hospital room which warmed her heart. She quickly replied, "He is very suspicious; I'm afraid he won't give up easily but will continue investigating you further. What are your plans?"

Mavis froze upon reading this message on her phone screen – plans? Normally speaking, she should leave Crana as soon as possible since she was almost exposed earlier, but then again she had promised Alistair that she would come back tomorrow to visit him... she didn't want to break that promise during their first meeting together with her son.

Since she was already here anyway, why not take advantage of this opportunity? If things got too bad later on, then worst case scenario would be confronting Anthony about divorce proceedings so that they could fight over custody rights over their son.

With determination set in stone within herself now, Mavis typed out another reply, "I'll find somewhere else nearby where I can stay put for now within this week, but don't worry I'll figure out how best avoid running into him."

Both women were tacitly avoiding mentioning any specific name throughout these messages exchanged between them.

After sending off this last text message, Mavis climbed behind wheel again buckling up securely before hitting accelerator pedal hard driving away from the Hospital's parking lot without looking back once more!

In recent years, she hadn't wasted any time. Not only did she get her driver's license, but she also did business overseas. In addition to running her own company, she also helped the Lloyd's Corp with international trade and signed a win-win cooperation agreement with Lyra.

Nowadays, although her assets can't compare to the Callahan family's wealth, she can still be considered a rich woman. She was eligible to fight for custody of her son.

In the hospital room, Lyra listened to Alistair and Molly laughing together and

sighed silently as she deleted those few text messages. It was easy to come back once but it might not be so easy next time.

After smoking an entire cigarette, Anthony personally went to the monitoring room. The hallway camera captured footage of a nurse-like woman entering Alistair's room and staying for fifteen minutes before leaving in a hurry. But the camera only captured a glimpse of the woman wearing a mask and nurse cap from one side or from behind; it never showed her face or even her eyes.

Anthony stared at that familiar figure on the surveillance video intently and said in a deep voice, "Keep investigating until we find this woman."

In the afternoon, Mavis drove back to an old apartment building where she used to live for five years before starting chasing after Anthony there; every brick and tile here was very familiar to her. She still wanted to live in this old apartment when returning Crana again.

She skillfully called up their former landlady on purposefully lowering down voice tone, "Hello there! I want rent your house."

Within minutes, her former landlady came downstairs.

Mavis took off sunglasses carefully and explained herself, "Hi! I want rent this house for one month at market highest price rate plus deposit..."

Her former landlady interrupted, "Missy! This isn't my house anymore; I'm just managing it now."

"What?"

"The whole building belongs to a person whose surname is Parker now – bought by some lady with that name several years ago at high price from me"

"Parker?" Mavis froze slightly – what were coincidences? Their surname matched exactly!

"Can you help me contact Miss Parker? I really like this place so much that I want rent it out too since its empty anyway- adding some life here won't hurt anyone right?"

"I can't make decisions about that myself- her husband manages everything. I'll ask him if he could let you stay here though- wait while I give him call please..." Her former landlady pulled out an old phone from pocket then squinted through reading glasses while checking contacts list on phone screen carefully

She stood in the hallway in front of the door, muttering to herself, "Strange, what number did I put Mr. Callahan on?"

Mavis heard her and furrowed her brows under her sunglasses. "Ms. landlady, which Mr. Callahan are you talking about?"



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The landlady smiled kindly, "In the whole of Suham, how many Mr. Callahans are there? With that kind of wealth, who else can afford to buy an entire apartment building in the city center?"

"But speaking of which, Mr. Callahan and his wife have such a good relationship that he gave away an entire set of apartments as a gift to her." Mavis's face under her mask turned pale inch by inch.

Mr. Callahan, Ms. Parker...

Anthony bought the small apartment she used to live in and put it under her name? When did he buy it?

Although this house was now hers, she obviously cannot live here.

The landlady was still looking for Anthony's phone number when Mavis quickly stopped her, "Don't need to make a call anymore. I'm not renting this house."

"Don't be in such a hurry, young lady. I'll be able to contact Mr. Callahan soon enough. Old people like me aren't very useful anymore and my eyesight isn't great either, so don't worry about me."

"..."

Before Mavis could say anything else, the landlady had already found the phone number and dialed it on speakerphone.

"Hello?"

A magnetic and deep voice came through with a familiar feeling that made Mavis clench her fists tightly.

"Mr. Callahan! There's a young lady looking to rent an apartment today – unit 16-3 – will you rent it?" The landlady asked.

The man on the other end was silent for several seconds before asking, "Which young lady?"

"Just..." The landlady hesitated before turning back around, "What's your last name again? Hey? Where did you go?"

The hallway was empty with no sign of Mavis anywhere.

The landlady had no choice but to tell him honestly, "She left; she probably won't rent anymore so sorry for bothering you, Mr. Callahan."

He hung up quickly but the incident didn't bother the landlady too much as she continued upstairs to embroider flowers without another thought about it.

After two minutes or so, Mavis had already returned back into her car.

Her emotions were surging inside; unable to calm down even after all these years.



Silent reminders kept telling her that no matter how many years passed, she would never be able to listen calmly or look at Anthony's face without nervousness or shortness of breath.

Back then when she almost died giving birth alone while Anthony went off searching for Jaqueline instead...

For this kind of man, she should have been dead inside long ago.

She slumped over onto steering wheel, burying her head into arms, fingers pinching until they turned pale, digesting all those past pains, the despair from day after day...

She didn't know how long passed before falling asleep.

Honking horns behind woke her up suddenly, and looking through rearview mirror, she saw cars waiting impatiently behind hers.

It was a black Rolls-Royce, a top-of-the-line luxury car, and the license plate belonged to Anthony. Mavis's breath caught in her throat as she instinctively tried to hide.

"Honk honk!" The Rolls-Royce continued to honk, and the driver seemed impatient.

Mavis had to be rational. She quickly looked around and saw that both sides of this narrow street were filled with parked cars. Her car could only be parked on the main road at that time, blocking the way for the car behind her.

Anthony's driver was probably urging her to move out of the way so they could pass through. It had nothing to do with Anthony catching her...

She calmed down and started up her car while giving way for Anthony's luxury vehicle behind her. As soon as she moved aside, his car turned onto another street and stopped in front of the apartment building.

Anthony came in a hurry; he didn't even bother about what happened earlier when the path was blocked by Mavis' car. He quickly got out of his vehicle and went upstairs.

He found the landlady directly asking, "Do you remember what that woman who rented your place looks like?"

The old lady thought carefully before answering, "She wore a mask and sunglasses so I couldn't see her face clearly but from what I heard, she sounded young, tall with black clothes."

This wasn't very useful information but Anthony asked seriously anyway, "Did you see what color hair she has?"

The old lady couldn't remember such details clearly; all she remembered was that it was dark – either hair or hat – but it seemed like everyone from Crana had black hair anyway?

Anthony didn't say anything else; he just turned around and walked away.

The old apartment building did not have any surveillance cameras installed, so if the woman who rented his place really did have black hair, then maybe

he overthought things too much...

Mavis checked into a hotel near Alistair's kindergarten after leaving hospital. When Alistair was discharged from hospital, he will return back his normal life again where Mavis can watch him every day near kindergarten.

Her phone beeped indicating new message notification:

[Is everything okay with your child? Don't worry about work matters – I've got everything under control.-Moore]

Upon seeing this message Mavis felt warm inside.

[Thank you]

She replied back before making herself some coffee while planning tomorrow's schedule.

Today she almost ended badly when Anthony nearly discovered her at hospital – he might become suspicious now or even hire bodyguards making it difficult for Mavis get close again...

She needed to think of something fast!

At night-time there was silence throughout the hospital except for Paloma reading bedtime stories aloud, while Alistair hugged tightly onto his panda, whispering softly, "Great-grandma today...I saw Mommy."

Paloma smiled even more lovingly as she tucked Alistair in, "Sleep tight, my little Alistair. You'll be able to see your mommy again when you fall asleep." Paloma didn't understand and thought Alistair meant he saw Mavis in his dreams.

"Poor Alistair," Paloma sighed sadly to herself, "Grow up quickly and be healthy and happy for a lifetime." She stayed by his bedside until he fell asleep.

The next day, Alistair woke up early because he remembered that Mommy said she would come visit him again today. He was very excited as soon as he opened his eyes.

But Paloma had no idea what made him so happy.

Half an hour later, Anthony rushed to the hospital and received a call from Chad just as he got out of the car.

"We followed those kidnappers and found something about Sheldon Alford, the leader of that underground organization. Do you want to come confirm the evidence?"

This was urgent business.

"I'm on my way," Anthony replied before instructing his driver, "In this box are corn porridge, corn buns and peeled boiled shrimp; take them into the ward and say they were made by our family chef."

The driver didn't understand why Anthony wouldn't tell Alistair what he had done for him these past few days since it was obvious how much love there was between father and son? But without further ado or questions asked, he

bowed respectfully at Anthony before carrying the food box into the elevator at once upon arriving at hospital premises.

Anthony got behind the wheel and drove himself to NIB.

Meanwhile, Mavis sat in her car watching as Anthony's luxury car left underground parking lot of hospital premises before quietly changing into her nurse uniform after yesterday's events unfolded.

However, after yesterday's incident, Anthony really did arrange six bodyguards from the Callahan family guarding outside their son's ward like a fortress wall- any slight movement or sound could easily draw attention from them.

What should she do now? Break her promise with her son?

Just when she felt helpless, Lyra sent her a message like timely rain pouring down on parched land...

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Lyra said, "This is the hospital under Micah's control. He just returned to Suham yesterday, and his office is on the top floor of the emergency building on the left. He can take you in."

Mavis breathed a sigh of relief and quickly went to the emergency room as Lyra instructed.

She knocked on the door, and a warm voice inside said, "Come in." Mavis smoothly entered the office.

This wasn't Mavis's first time meeting Micah, but he didn't seem interested in looking at her for too long.

"I know about your relationship with Anthony. Although I don't know what you're up to with my sister, I don't like asking too many questions when someone has to sneak around just to see their own son."

Mavis stood awkwardly at the door and bowed to him. "Thank you, Micah." Micah calmly put on his white coat buttoning every button precisely before putting on gloves, a mask, and an ID badge before walking over next to Mavis.

"Your hair..." he frowned. "The color is too obvious; wear a black wig and deep brown contact lenses so that your features are covered up."

"Okay," she replied.

After about ten minutes of preparation time during which Mavis dressed herself appropriately while holding onto medical equipment trays following behind Micah, they walked towards Alistair's hospital room, only for them both

be stopped by security guards outside it.

Micah had an icy expression as he took out his ID badge to Callahan family security personnel, which immediately made them respectful towards him,, saying, “Oh Mr. Lloyd! Are you going personally check Alistair?”

He gave a slight nod without any warmth or friendliness, making them apologize profusely before letting them through into Alistair’s room. They were greeted by Alistair not recognizing who the nurse was due her disguise. She revealed herself, causing him great joy upon seeing her again after some time apart due being hospitalized.

“Mommy~ It’s so good seeing you again!”

Micah stood near doorway, blocking off any view from anyone else outside, while checking his watch frequently and reminding everyone present that they needed leave soon, since staying longer would attract suspicion towards their visitation duration.

Alistair understood this message well enough himself asking if Mavis was leaving already, because she didn’t want his father finding out about their secret visits?

“Actually, Mommy, you don’t need worry,” he continued “Daddy hasn’t visited me once since I’ve been here.”

Feeling disappointed by this revelation, he pointed at breakfast box placed beside bed side table. “Even breakfast gets delivered by the driver now instead, because Daddy doesn’t want to see me.”

Mavis followed his gaze to the bedside table, feeling a bit puzzled. Lyra had told her that Anthony would go to the hospital every few hours, making five or six round trips a day. But her son said he had never seen him enter the ward. What was he up to?

Without thinking too much about it, she patiently explained to her son, “If Mr. Callahan finds out I came here, he won’t let me see you again in the future. So Alistair, you have to help me keep this secret between us. It’s our little secret.”

“Okay, Mommy, don’t worry. I won’t tell Daddy,” he nodded earnestly.

Mavis looked at his fair and tender face with bright blue eyes and grew more fond of him by the minute – she couldn’t get enough of him.

Micah didn’t show much expression as he stood guard motionlessly like a statue without any thoughts except for breathing.

After about half an hour, Micah checked his watch and urged them, “We need to go now.”

Alistair reluctantly said goodbye from his bed, “Mommy, when will you come back? Can I still see you next time?”

Mavis leaned down and gently kissed his forehead, “Of course we’ll meet again.”

Micah reminded her to put on her wig and contact lenses before checking his watch again, "Let's go."

Just like when they entered earlier, they left one after another without arousing any suspicion from the bodyguards.

By the time Anthony came out of NIB, Mavis had already returned to her hotel room for rest – they missed each other completely.

\*

Alistair stayed in hospital for three days until on fourth day when everything was stable emotionally; finally seeing Anthony who disappeared from sight for several days made Alistair surprisingly calm with slightly pouting lips, indicating some displeasure but no extreme emotions or reactions were shown.

Anthony breathed a sigh of relief as he personally took out Alistair's coat, wanting help him wear it, but was refused by Alistair shaking head saying, "No need, Daddy! Mature good boy can dress himself up!".

Having gone through one kidnapping experience seemed like it made Alistair more independent? He felt gratified watching how well-adjusted his son appeared putting on clothes himself after receiving them from his Dad's hands. Only Paloma noticed that something wasn't right between the father and son, suggesting kindly, "Anthony, why don't you carry Alistair downstairs? Let's see if he gained weight these past few days."

Before Anthony could answer though, Alistair jumped off bed, running over towards Paloma and extending both arms, asking, "Grandma, hold my hand!" It was clear what message this gesture conveyed – He didn't want his Dad carrying him.

Paloma and Anthony exchanged a helpless look.

Soon, the luxury car pulled up in front of the Callahan Residence, and they finally arrived home.

Alistair didn't like the smell of hospital disinfectant. He thought even the small grassy area in his backyard smelled better.

But as soon as they arrived home, an unexpected guest appeared at their doorstep.

A woman with slender legs stepped out of a car, took off her sunglasses with one hand, revealing a neat and pretty shoulder-length haircut. She was wearing a military green jumpsuit that made her look very capable.

Her gaze remained fixed on Anthony's face.

When Anthony saw her, his expression became subtle and deep.

She walked over with a big smile on her face. "Anthony! It's been so many years since we've seen each other. You haven't forgotten me already, have you?"

Anthony kept a cold expression on his face and said nothing.

It was Paloma who spoke first, "Bryleigh! What brings you back here all of sudden? You could have called ahead."

"Mrs. Callahan," Bryleigh said cheerfully while looking at Anthony again, "I have some good news to share with you all – I'm retired from the service now! No more business trips to border for me."

Bryleigh then turned to Anthony again and gave him a beautiful wink, "Since I'm here already, why don't you invite me in for some tea or dinner?"

Anthony still remained silent but took hold of his son's hand tightly before walking towards their villa without saying anything else.

Bryleigh looked disappointed, "Mrs. Callahan, it seems like after all these years, Anthony still hasn't forgiven me nor does he seem to care about my presence."

After all, she was just visiting, so Paloma had no choice but to entertain Bryleigh herself, "Don't mind this stubborn boy. I'll make sure he doesn't offend our guest. Let's go inside for some tea!"

In the garden, Alistair held onto one hand from his father while holding onto his panda toy on another. He occasionally glanced back at Bryleigh who he had never met before today. He noticed that she seemed familiar with his dad, and there were strange vibes between them too.

"Watch your step; be careful not to trip over any steps," warned Anthony softly beside Alistair, "look where you're going instead of staring around aimlessly."

"Oh," replied Alistair poutingly, "but Daddy... who is that lady? Why is she calling you by such an affectionate name?"

#### Chapter 1055 Wanting to Be his Stepmother

Anthony's face was serious, and he seemed reluctant to answer the question. He casually replied, "It's an adult matter. Don't worry about it, kid."

Alistair pouted unhappily and felt frustrated inside. His father's attitude was impatient; he obviously didn't like him.

He let go of Anthony's hand and quickly ran ahead with his short legs into the villa.

"Alistair, watch where you're going. Don't cry if you fall," Anthony warned in a deep voice as he turned around to see Paloma leading Bryleigh inside while they exchanged pleasantries.

His deep blue eyes darkened slightly as he didn't even want to glance at that woman out of the corner of his eye. He spun around and headed straight for his study.

As dinner time approached, there was a flurry of activity in the Callahan family kitchen while the hosts remained leisurely.

Alistair returned to his small room and sat on the carpet playing with his toy

four-wheel drive car. Only these little things could temporarily make him forget about the unpleasantness between him and Anthony as he immersed himself in playing games and daydreaming.

After a few minutes had passed, suddenly someone opened his door from outside wearing high heels. Alistair heard it and turned around only to see Bryleigh walking in without knocking first.

He felt annoyed, "Isn't it polite to knock before entering someone else's room? Didn't your parents teach you that?"

Bryleigh smiled but didn't answer him directly; instead she walked over next to him gently coaxing, "Can I call you Alistair? Is it fun being alone in your room? Do you want me to play with you?"

"No thanks! Please leave," Alistair said coldly because he didn't like her at all since she called his father "Anthony", which was too intimate for comfort, making him feel threatened by her presence.

Bryleigh shrugged off his rejection, picking up one of Alistair's toys from off of the carpet. "Kid, are you curious about what my relationship is with your father?"

Alistair blinked his blue eyes looking surprised then put down his toy four-wheel drive car asking curiously, "Will you really tell me?"

"Of course! You have every right to know." Bryleigh smiled softly then whispered, "I'm actually your father's ex-girlfriend – we were both trained at Security Agency camp together but we had some unpleasantness between us, so we separated after I went on duty guarding borders."

Alistair listened intently, feeling very surprised by this revelation and asking more questions, "Was my dad really powerful back then? Why isn't he still Director now?"

Bryleigh smiled, "Then you probably have to ask him yourself. However, that's his dark history and not something he would want to share with you. Besides, that's not the point. The point is I'm back and I can tell he still has feelings for me..."

Before she could finish, Alistair said, "You want to be my stepmother?"

"Is it not good? I feel that we have a good connection, and I will take good care of you and treat you as my own son."

"Not good!"

Alistair answered decisively, and his small eyebrows furrowed in anger. "I have a real mother. I don't need you. You're a bad woman trying to destroy my family."

Bryleigh covered her lips and giggled.

"Your mother has been dead for five years. Why are you still thinking about her? And as a child, you cannot be so selfish. You cannot always have your father to yourself. He needs a suitable and excellent partner. Do you



understand?”

Alistair was extremely angry upon hearing this, and he stood up abruptly with his fists clenched tightly.

“My mom didn’t die. She just went to a faraway place before. She has recently come back and visited me. I don’t need you, the unnecessary old auntie! Go away!”

But Bryleigh sneered, “When I got back, I heard that you just got out of the hospital today. It seems that you were in the hospital because of some mental problems. To imagine that a woman who has been dead for five years comes back to see you? And you want to take over your father? You’re a selfish, sick, bad boy.”

“What did you say?! Say it again?”

His small chest heaved violently, his beautiful eyes turned red, and he threw his four-wheel drive at her.

“Get out! I hate you!”

With a scream, Bryleigh didn’t dodge and was hit right on the forehead. Paloma learned that Bryleigh went to Alistair’s room and was about to go upstairs to see the two of them when she happened to hear Bryleigh’s screams.

“What’s going on?”

Paloma pushed open the door and immediately noticed that Bryleigh was injured, with blood on her forehead. She looked at Paloma with a sad expression and said, “Paloma, I don’t know why Alistair had to use his four-wheel drive to hit me.”

Alistair, with his hands on his hips and a look of disgust, glared at Bryleigh. Paloma didn’t know what had happened between the two, but regardless, Alistair’s disrespect towards his elders was not acceptable.

“Alistair, apologize to Bryleigh quickly.”

“I won’t! I’m not wrong. She’s got a bad mouth and bad manners and she deserves it!”

“Alistair,” said Paloma, winking wildly, “listen, apologize first.”

Alistair pouted and turned away, “No, she doesn’t deserve it.”

Paloma had always been an advocate of gentle education and didn’t know how to deal with the mischievous little brat.

Until Anthony came down from his study upstairs.

After taking a quick glance around the room, Anthony asked sternly, “Alistair, why did you hit her?”

As soon as he heard his father’s voice, Alistair’s eyes welled up with tears. He was so upset that he could barely speak. “She just said...”

“Anthony, forget it. It’s just a small injury; I’m fine,” Bryleigh interrupted him immediately and pretended to be relaxed. “I told him to listen to you more and

not make you angry all the time. Maybe that sentence angered him.”

Alistair was stunned.

Could there be such a disgusting behavior? Telling lies with open eyes?

He was furious and grabbed a small toy from the carpet again before throwing it at Bryleigh once more. “You’re lying! You’re a bad woman!”

“Alistair!”

Anthony scolded him while catching the toy thrown at him by Alistair seriously, staring at him. “You’re becoming more lawless every day; even in front of me, you want to hit someone? Where did your upbringing go? ”

He bit his lip in frustration as tears swirled in his eyes stubbornly, refusing to give up and muttering softly, “I’m not wrong.”

Seeing things getting worse by the minute, Bryleigh pressed her forehead, “Anthony, I... I suddenly feel dizzy.”

Paloma immediately supported her, “Then let’s go get checked out at hospital first. The incident earlier was caused by my grandson’s mistake. I hope you don’t take it too hard. We won’t refuse any medical expenses or compensation.”

Alistair was so angry that he almost jumped up. “Grandma, I’m not wrong!”

Bryleigh’s wound started bleeding which meant hitting her was indeed true.

Paloma could only choose to appease the injured party first without making things bigger than they already were.

“Anthony, you drive faster. Take Bryleigh to hospital now.”

Anthony nodded in agreement, his handsome brows furrowed tightly as he ordered Saul, “Take Alistair for self-reflection in our ancestral hall.”

“Yes, sir.”

Saul had no choice but went forward trying pull Alistair along. Angered, Alistair struggled free from Saul, “She is bad, and Daddy is bad too. I don’t want love Daddy anymore!”

Wiping away some unmanly tears, Alistair sobbed while running towards ancestral hall direction.

Anthony watched the young boy’s figure disappear and let out a sigh of resignation. He turned to the butler and said, “Keep an eye on Alistair, but don’t disturb him. Let him calm down for a bit and I’ll handle it when I come back.”

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### Chapter 1055 Wanting to Be his Stepmother

Anthony's face was serious, and he seemed reluctant to answer the question. He casually replied, "It's an adult matter. Don't worry about it, kid."

Alistair pouted unhappily and felt frustrated inside. His father's attitude was impatient; he obviously didn't like him.

He let go of Anthony's hand and quickly ran ahead with his short legs into the villa.

"Alistair, watch where you're going. Don't cry if you fall," Anthony warned in a deep voice as he turned around to see Paloma leading Bryleigh inside while they exchanged pleasantries.

His deep blue eyes darkened slightly as he didn't even want to glance at that woman out of the corner of his eye. He spun around and headed straight for his study.

As dinner time approached, there was a flurry of activity in the Callahan family kitchen while the hosts remained leisurely.

Alistair returned to his small room and sat on the carpet playing with his toy four-wheel drive car. Only these little things could temporarily make him forget about the unpleasantness between him and Anthony as he immersed himself in playing games and daydreaming.

After a few minutes had passed, suddenly someone opened his door from outside wearing high heels. Alistair heard it and turned around only to see Bryleigh walking in without knocking first.

He felt annoyed, "Isn't it polite to knock before entering someone else's room? Didn't your parents teach you that?"

Bryleigh smiled but didn't answer him directly; instead she walked over next to him gently coaxing, "Can I call you Alistair? Is it fun being alone in your room? Do you want me to play with you?"

"No thanks! Please leave," Alistair said coldly because he didn't like her at all since she called his father "Anthony", which was too intimate for comfort, making him feel threatened by her presence.

Bryleigh shrugged off his rejection, picking up one of Alistair's toys from off of the carpet. "Kid, are you curious about what my relationship is with your father?"

Alistair blinked his blue eyes looking surprised then put down his toy four-wheel drive car asking curiously, "Will you really tell me?"

"Of course! You have every right to know." Bryleigh smiled softly then whispered, "I'm actually your father's ex-girlfriend – we were both trained at

Security Agency camp together but we had some unpleasantness between us, so we separated after I went on duty guarding borders.”

Alistair listened intently, feeling very surprised by this revelation and asking more questions, “Was my dad really powerful back then? Why isn’t he still Director now?”

Bryleigh smiled, “Then you probably have to ask him yourself. However, that’s his dark history and not something he would want to share with you. Besides, that’s not the point. The point is I’m back and I can tell he still has feelings for me...”

Before she could finish, Alistair said, “You want to be my stepmother?”

“Is it not good? I feel that we have a good connection, and I will take good care of you and treat you as my own son.”

“Not good!”

Alistair answered decisively, and his small eyebrows furrowed in anger. “I have a real mother. I don’t need you. You’re a bad woman trying to destroy my family.”

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“Your mother has been dead for five years. Why are you still thinking about her? And as a child, you cannot be so selfish. You cannot always have your father to yourself. He needs a suitable and excellent partner. Do you understand?”

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Chapter 1056 He Believes in His Son

After arranging everything, he turned around and walked away without waiting for a certain injured person. He seemed even colder than before.

“Anthony, wait for me,” Bryleigh caught up with him.

The two of them entered the garage one after the other.

As Bryleigh was about to open the passenger door, Anthony coldly reminded her, “Sit in the back seat.”

Although Bryleigh was very unhappy, she didn’t say anything in the end.

The luxury car left the Callahan Residence. Bryleigh was still holding her forehead and maybe even showing signs of pain between her eyebrows as if she had been hurt badly. Unfortunately, Anthony didn’t want to look at her face at all.

It was too quiet inside the car so Bryleigh had to find a topic herself. “Anthony, your wife has been dead for so long now. You should consider your own happiness for your remaining years.”

Even though his wife had passed away a long time ago and there was no one sitting in the passenger seat next to him anymore, as his ex-girlfriend who he hadn’t seen in years instead, it made her feel extremely uncomfortable that he wouldn’t let her sit there.

But thinking about why she came here this time made her have to speak softly and humbly towards this man sitting in front of her.

“Anthony, I know I wasn’t right before but it’s been so many years now. Can you forgive me? I came back this time because I couldn’t let go of you. Can

we start again?”

Suddenly there was an abrupt brake from the luxury car, which caused Bryleigh’s inertia almost making her hit into something on front seat. She could only rub gently against herself while looking innocently at Anthony asking, “Anthony?”

“Get out,” Anthony said expressionlessly.

Bryleigh froze and looked outside through the window, “We haven’t arrived at hospital yet; are you going to kick me out already?”

He repeated patiently, “Get off.”

Bryleigh did not move but leaned softly against the car door, saying weakly, “I feel dizzy; my head seems slightly concussed...”

“Don’t pretend.” He didn’t want to watch any more acting from her side as he spoke bluntly, “You’re just scratched a bit on your skin; you’re an elite woman who served in military forces – what’s with pretending weakness? It’s disgusting.”

“At least it’s your son who hit me! Can’t you talk nicely instead of being sarcastic?”

“I know Alistair well enough that he wouldn’t hit someone without reason. You must have provoked him somehow. What did you say?”

At this point, all that remained for Bryliegh was explaining things lightly. “I told him that I am your ex-girlfriend and wanted to continue our relationship when returning home this time... And also wanted marry you.”

“I have never had any substantial relationship with you. I agreed to your confession at first, but you regretted it in a few days. You looked down on my background and despised that I could not take control of the Callahan family. You used the excuse of going on a mission to leave for the border, and our relationship ended long ago.”

There was a cold and fierce look between his eyebrows as he glared at her with a sinister expression. Grinding his teeth, he warned, “Bryleigh, I’m warning you not to have any ideas about my son. If you dare to badmouth him again in front of him, I will make your entire family pay for your mistake.”

Bryleigh’s face turned pale and she quickly spoke in a soft and coquettish tone, “Anthony, you’re exaggerating. How could I dare to touch your son? You saw it yourself, he was the one who hit me. I didn’t even lay a finger on him.”

Anthony’s handsome face turned cold as he casually pulled out a wad of cash from his wallet and tossed it to the back row.

“Medical expenses, take it and go.”

The extremely indifferent tone seemed to suggest that staying with her for a few more minutes would pollute the air.

As a young lady from a wealthy family, Bryleigh had never lacked money since childhood and had never been given money by anyone. Anthony’s



actions undoubtedly made her feel insulted.

But she held back, "Anthony, can you please not treat me like this?"

Anthony's patience was running out, "If you make me repeat it for the third time, you will know the cost. Do you want to try?"

"..."

Compared to her family, the Callahan family was one of the three giants in Suham's aristocratic families.

Nowadays, Anthony was the undisputed leader of the Callahan family.

His threat was not limited to literal threats.

Bryleigh was fearful in her heart.

She was kicked off the car like this, at 7:10 in the evening, by Anthony's luxury car that sped away leaving her choking on its exhaust fumes.

"Anthony!"

She gritted her teeth and glared angrily at the taillights of the luxury car, "If it weren't for my request, do you really think that with your illegitimate identity, you deserve to have me take a second look at you!?"

...

On the way back, Anthony did not stop on the road.

Paloma looked at him in surprise and said, "So fast? It's only been twenty minutes. Is Bryleigh okay?"

"External skin injuries, no big deal," he casually replied and continued walking towards the hall without stopping for a moment.

Paloma quickly shouted, "You need to reason with Alistair and not resort to violence!"

Anthony walked fast and disappeared long ago.

Upon arriving at the hall, Anthony immediately spotted a little child snuggled up on a soft cushion, soundly sleeping with his mouth slightly open and drool soaking into the cushion beneath her.

He took off his suit jacket and crouched down, wrapping his thin son's body in it. He then took out a wet wipe and wiped the drool from his son's mouth.

Once a man obsessed with cleanliness, he didn't mind the child's saliva getting on his hands as he carefully cleaned his son's little face.

However, after twenty minutes, Alistair was not sleeping deeply. When the cold wet wipe touched him, he woke up immediately.

He knew it was his daddy who had come back but kept his eyes tightly closed and buried his face in the suit jacket to continue pretending to sleep.

His eyelashes trembled from time to time, betraying him. Anthony gently tugged at Alistair's earlobe and said, "You're still pretending even though you see me here? Don't you want to explain about hitting her earlier?"

Alistair half-closed his eyes and secretly glanced at Anthony's hands before daring to open them and sit up straight when he confirmed that there was no

cane in sight.

He hated being wrongly accused but also feared being beaten if taken into the hall. So he quickly defended himself,

“She said she wants to be my stepmother!”

“She cursed my mom dead!”

“She also... also called me selfish and sick! I couldn't take it anymore so I threw the toy at her.”

He pouted as tears streamed down from those crystal-clear eyes filled with indescribable sadness and grievances.

“I know you and grandma don't believe me,” He cried out loudly. “Although... although hitting that bad auntie until she bled wasn't right of me, I just didn't want to be punished again...”

Sitting obediently now on top of Anthony's lap while sniffing away sobs every now-and-then, Alistair hiccupped between breaths while looking up into Anthony's face for reassurance.

Anthony maintained eye contact with Alistair while rubbing those rough fingertips gently over those soft cheeks and wiping away any trace of tears.

“Okay baby boy,” He began slowly, “I believe you now. But listen closely okay? If anyone ever bullies or mistreats you again, tell me first before doing anything rash like hitting. Because violence is never an answer especially when dealing with adults or elders. Do you understand?”

Alistair nodded vigorously while sniffing away some more tears.

Anthony finally smiled satisfactorily, ruffling his little head and jokingly said, “A man who cries at the slightest inconvenience and sheds tears like a donkey. Are you embarrassed?”

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“Absolutely not embarrassing! Absolutely not embarrassing!” Alistair huffed, intentionally grabbing Anthony's hand and wiping all the tears from his eyelashes onto Anthony's back in revenge.

Anthony chuckled, “Alright, let's go eat dinner.”

Alistair didn't move. With a more stable mood, he pouted and pleaded, “Daddy, can you stay away from that Bryleigh?”

He didn't like Bryleigh at all. He could even say he hated her.

Her name had already been added to his blacklist with a big red X in his mind.

Anthony nodded, “Okay, I won't have too much contact with her.”

He agreed readily and Alistair felt happy inside.

His Daddy was doing well. He would continue to love his Daddy~  
Haha–

Children's emotions come and go quickly.

He let Anthony hold his hand as father and son walked out of the hall together towards the dining hall.

On the way there, he thought of Bryleigh again and looked up to ask, "Daddy, are you really old lovers with that old lady?"

Anthony didn't answer.

"She said she was your first love. What about Mommy? How many girlfriends did you have before Mommy?"

Anthony frowned slightly at this question. "She wasn't my first love."

His first love should have been Lyra. But when Lyra passed away tragically due to an accident reported by Lloyd family news media outlets, he drank himself into a stupor every night for an entire year until Bryleigh confessed her feelings for him the following year. Under some emotional distress, he agreed despite only being together for just a few days before it ended abruptly.

As for Mavis, they never dated officially; they went on one symbolic date then went straight to register their marriage at city hall early next morning without any fanfare or celebration whatsoever.

Whenever Mavis' name was mentioned though, it caused him pain deep down inside, so he suppressed those emotions so as not reveal them in front of their son.

Alistair continued asking, "Daddy Daddy! That old lady said you used to be some kind of official or something? Why aren't you anymore?"

"When will Mommy come home? Did you do something wrong that made Mommy refuse to come back?"

"I don't want any other aunties or stepmothers. Will you be able to coax Mommy back home?"

Alistair kept chattering away while gesturing wildly with his hands as if trying convey something important through sign language.

All Anthony could hear was what sounded like an annoying little mosquito buzzing around in circles near his ear, giving him a headache.

"Adult matters are things you don't understand yet, so focus more on your studies," replied Anthony sternly after hearing enough questions from Alistair about adult relationships that were beyond what children should know about yet anyway.

Alistair pouted again, feeling unhappy now. His father still refused to tell him anything, thinking he was just a kid who didn't deserve to know. His father didn't trust him.

If it weren't for that old lady, he probably wouldn't have known they had been in love before.

And his father seemed to only care about work and studying, not at all about whether he was happy or not.

“I’m too stupid. No matter how much I study, I can never compare to Spencer.”

With a hint of sadness in his voice, Alistair let go of Anthony’s hand and ran ahead with his short legs towards the dining room.

“Alistair.”

Anthony called out but the little guy ran too fast and didn’t even look back at him.

In the dining room.

Paloma had been waiting for a long time, crouching down and waiting for the little bundle of joy to jump into her arms.

“Good baby, did you get hit?”

She picked up Alistair’s small hand and checked it. It was clean and tender without any signs of being beaten up. She breathed a sigh of relief as she realized that Alistair must not have gotten into trouble on his way here.

Anthony came into the dining room one minute later than expected, which made Paloma feel somewhat curious because they should have come together.

At the table, Paloma noticed that something was off between them.

Alistair refused Anthony’s peeled shrimp instead looking at her, “Can I eat what you peel, grandma?”

Anthony showed no particular expression as he ate that shrimp himself while calmly wiping his hands clean before kindly advising, “Grandma, you shouldn’t peel too many shrimps. Give him seven or eight at most.”

Alistair became very unhappy with this advice, showing extreme rebelliousness, “When I grow up, I’ll eat an entire bowl full!”

Paloma giggled incessantly, “Then you should eat more now so you can grow up quickly!”

Alistair nodded seriously with a smile on his face, “The shrimp you peeled is delicious!”

Paloma sensed some resentment towards Anthony from Alistair so she glanced over at Anthony beside him.

Anthony remained silent while eating slowly with composure; seemingly lost in thought rather than paying attention to dinner.

Late night.

Anthony sat alone in his study reading through materials provided by the hospital administration team.

The phone was on speaker, and Kane was reporting, “According to the hospital’s investigation, none of the nurses have dyed their hair blonde. The hospital has a policy that prohibits nurses from dyeing their hair in obvious

colors. A nurse had dyed her hair red a few days ago and was ordered to change it back and punished. Therefore, there is no nurse in the staff list who matches the one in the surveillance video.”

“The hospital is taking this matter seriously and investigating thoroughly. They promised to give you an update as soon as they have any news,” Kane continued.

Anthony remembered that familiar figure again while also thinking about the kidnapping case information provided by NIB earlier today. “Is it possible that she wore a wig? Sheldon Alford’s people might be involved?”

Kane pondered for a moment before answering, “It’s possible but... if it were Sheldon Alford because of his grudge against you, he would definitely harm Alistair somehow. But in reality, Alistair wasn’t hurt at all; he even became emotionally stable afterward.”

Emotionally stable...

Anthony kept repeating this phrase over and over again in his mind; something felt off about it but also impossible.

“We must find out who that woman is,” Anthony said firmly before hanging up with Kane.

He left his study room first to check on his son.

The little guy was curled up on his bed with an open posture while hugging his panda plushie tightly.

Anthony gently tucked him into bed before leaning down to kiss him lightly on his forehead, then quietly left after closing the door behind him.

The night was quiet except for occasional insect chirps from outside.

The entire Callahan Residence seemed asleep except for Anthony who went alone into the hall where he watched the photo of someone special...

Ever since leaving the hospital after being kidnapped, Alistair quickly returned back to normal life.

Under Anthony’s restrictions, no one within the Callahan family dared mention anything related to kidnapping case around Alistair, fearing another extreme reaction from him.

Mavis stayed at a hotel which happened to overlook her son’s kindergarten playground through binoculars during morning exercise time when she could see her son clearly.

It felt wonderful being so close yet so far away from her child for five years until now.

Unfortunately though the Callahan family’s bodyguards always stood guard outside of kindergarten, making sure Mavis couldn’t get any closer than she already had been able to.

After four days of observing them closely though, Mavis noticed something peculiar: every day at 12:30 pm sharp, each bodyguard would leave briefly for

around half an hour or so, giving Mavis just enough time.

At that time, Alistair was also having lunch in the kindergarten, which was the safest place for him. Therefore, the bodyguards could leave for a while. After figuring out their routine, Mavis chose a rainy day and went to the kindergarten fully armed during a gap when the bodyguards were off duty.

At that moment, Alistair was eating seriously.

“Alistair baby, your auntie is here. Let’s go with me.”

Auntie?

Alistair was confused. He only remembered two aunts: Esther Callahan (Melissa Walsh) and Rebecca Callahan. Where did this auntie come from? Was she related to his mother’s side of the family?

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Alistair didn’t understand the situation and blindly took his teacher’s hand, following her to the small playground outside. On the playground, a woman with a mask and hat was standing there, slender in figure. Although she covered herself tightly, Alistair still saw her distinctive golden hair at first glance and instantly became excited.

“Mommy! Mommy finally came to see me!” he exclaimed.

The teacher next to him was confused. “Mommy? You’re his mother not aunt?”

Mavis crouched down to hug him and explained with a smile, “I’m his aunt. We look alike so he always calls me mom by mistake.”

The teacher didn’t say much about it since everyone in the school knew that Alistair was the beloved son of the Callahan family and he had lost his mother when he was young.

“You two can talk but don’t take too long. Don’t delay Alistair’s rest time,” said the teacher before leaving.

Mavis politely nodded her head and promised, “Don’t worry, I’ll keep an eye on time. No more than fifteen minutes.”

After everyone else left, Alistair asked curiously, “Are you really my aunt? Not my mommy?”

Mavis took off her mask and put his little hand on her cheek with a bright smile. “What do you think?” Her face was very beautiful just like in their wedding photo.

Alistair confirmed it happily by shouting, “You’re my mommy!”

Mavis made a shushing gesture at him as she said softly, “For some reasons,

I will tell you later when you grow up enough to understand them better; for now this is our secret between us only, okay? Can you keep this secret for me?"

"Okay!" He obediently agreed but then whispered, "But what should I call you then?"

"In front of others just call me Auntie," Mavis replied while rubbing his head affectionately.

He didn't say anything more because calling Mavis Auntie instead of Mommy felt unfair to her as far as he concerned.

Sensing what he might be feeling upset about, Mavis leaned closer towards him, whispering gently into his ear, "It's only temporary; someday soon enough, you'll be able to shout 'mommy' loudly in front of anyone."

And she would make sure that day came sooner rather than later!

"Okay." Alistair pouted slightly before calling out weakly, "Auntie~"

"So sweet." Mavis melted from how adorable he looked. Reaching out for one of those golden locks which fascinated him earlier, he asked curiously, "Why is your hair color different from mine though?"

"Maybe... someone's genes are too strong, and you look more like him."

He shook his head. "Daddy said he was much smarter than me when he was a kid. I'm not smart enough."

He didn't think he looked like his father.

Mavis chuckled at what she heard. "When I was your age, I was just a country girl from Teflayria and I couldn't even read. You probably got it from me in that aspect."

She had learned a lot of knowledge from Anthony when he came to teach as a volunteer teacher.

When she was thinking back on the past, Mavis's expression dimmed and her face was covered by her black hat.

"Mommy, when will you come over next?"

"If the situation allows it, I'll come often so you won't find me annoying."

Alistair hugged her neck with his small hands and affectionately pressed his cheek against hers.

Perhaps it was the natural telepathy between mother and son or perhaps it had been so many years since they last saw each other that Alistair really liked her and unconsciously wanted to get closer to her.

At the same time, Bryleigh walked sadly towards the kindergarten carrying cake and toys.

This time she went home after being scolded by her father for arguing with Alistair; such behavior was very foolish if she wanted to successfully marry into the Callahan family and solve the urgent problem of her family. She must pass this test with Alistair.



Even though she wasn't happy about it at all, Bryleigh carefully dressed up before coming here today.

As soon as she reached the door of the kindergarten, she saw Alistair chatting with a woman on the playground.

From where Bryleigh stood outside of their view range, the woman had turned away so Bryleigh couldn't see her face but could clearly feel how excited Alistair seemed.

Their relationship seemed quite good.

"Alistair, good afternoon! I came to see you," She stood outside of iron gate of kindergarten knocking on its door while wearing an amiable smile on her face. Mavis abruptly stopped talking to Alistair about something else, because timer set in phone rang indicating fifteen minutes were up now.

"I'll be back again soon," Mavis coaxed warmly before leaving him behind reluctantly. "I'll bring gifts for you next time."

A disappointed expression appeared on little boy's face as he let go off his mother's embrace unwillingly, only able watch helplessly as Mavis left.

Since Mavis needed leave now, she could only walk towards iron gate while keeping low profile. As result, she brushed past Bryleigh without being recognized even though latter already put mask onto herself.

Bryleigh became curious about who this woman suddenly appeared beside Alistair was. While walking into school yard, she asked Alistair smilingly, "Who is that? Your fifth aunt?"

Fifth aunt, also known as Melissa, had been wandering for over twenty years before the Callahan family finally recognized her. That was why Bryleigh had never met her before.

Alistair snorted arrogantly. "I'm not telling you about that! Bad woman! She's someone very dear to me, and you will never be my stepmother!"

Just a few days ago they had an unpleasant argument, but Bryleigh acted as if nothing happened and approached him with a smile.

"Alistair, I was wrong the other day. I said some things that were too harsh. Don't take it to heart though; deep down I really like you. Can we be friends?"

"Who wants to be friends with you?" Alistair stepped back and held his nose in disgust at her perfume.

Bryleigh squatted down in front of him with a charming smile on her face and wasn't angry at all. "Look here now, I've apologized to you already! You're generous so don't hold grudges against me okay? Here's a small gift for you; it comes with treats for your little friends in the kindergarten."

Alistair didn't buy into this attempt at reconciliation and took another step back from her while still holding his nose in disdain.

"The smell of your perfume is so strong! It stinks! Stay away from me!" He grew angrier by the second. "You made her leave because of this! Get your

stuff outta here!”

He turned around and ran into the room without looking back at Bryleigh once more.

Underneath Bryleigh’s delicate makeup, she struggled not to lose control of herself completely: how dare he insulted her limited edition French perfume? “What an uncivilized brat!” She muttered under breath through gritted teeth. “When I marry into the Callahan family one day, watch how I’ll teach you manners.”

The next moment she saw the principal coming out, she quickly put on a smiley face again while handing over some cake, “Hi! I came to see Alistair today bringing gifts for him and his little buddies here. Would you please help distribute them?”

“Sure thing,” the principal replied politely after exchanging pleasantries with Bryleigh who then left right away afterwards.

As soon as she walked away, two guards from the Callahan family returned. They both looked wary when they saw Bryleigh but she remained poised nonetheless. “Don’t give me those suspicious looks. I am Anthony’s friend or should say former lover. I won’t hurt Alistair.”

After making such bold statements, Bryliegh got into her luxury car without any hesitation or fear. The two guards exchanged glances before reporting everything that just happened to Anthony just in case anything went wrong later on.

Bryleigh couldn’t stop thinking about what had just happened. She had noticed the woman earlier, even though she was wearing a mask and a hat that covered her eyes, but her figure was great and she seemed to have a good demeanor.

Alistair, that little brat, said she was his mother’s sister? Anthony’s short-lived wife had such a young sister in the family? And Bryleigh heard that the woman was a foreigner...

The more she thought about it, the more alarmed Bryleigh felt. She quickly pulled out her phone and dialed a number.

“Help me check what relatives Anthony’s wife has in her family. You have so many questions; someone is trying to take Mrs. Callahan’s position right now. I need to get rid of any obstacles,” Bryleigh said.

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For two consecutive days, Mavis found opportunities to visit her son at kindergarten. Even if each time only lasted less than half an hour with him, it made her feel fulfilled.

“Mommy~” Alistair called out softly like he was being spoiled before realizing he got it wrong and covering his mouth quickly before asking quietly, “Tomorrow afternoon there will be sports day at school; will you come, Mommy?”

He heard other kids’ parents would come together with them for this event and he had been looking forward to it for so long.

Mavis hesitated for some time without saying anything when faced with this parent-child activity, because Anthony would definitely be there too – if Anthony came then, she couldn’t show up.

Seeing that Mavis didn’t answer after some time passed by, Alistair already guessed the answer, “It’s okay if you don’t come. I know you seem to have many difficulties lately.”

Her son was so understanding, which made Mavis heartbroken as she stroked his small head while pointing towards another building not far away.

“That is where the hotel I live is located. I can watch you from above and take pictures of you from afar during sports day.”

“Okay! Although you won’t participate in person, this also counts as spending time with me! Hehe~”

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The next day, Zack stood on an empty space in front of his desk reporting seriously to Anthony, “Sheldon Alford over there has been identified as our prime suspect regarding Alistair’s kidnapping case – not only that but we also cooperated with NIB investigation which revealed their involvement in falsely accusing Alistair causing injury during their previous fight.”

Anthony had a serious expression on his face, as he lightly twisted the ring on his left hand’s ring finger with his right hand. “He endured for five years, but couldn’t take it anymore?”

Zack sighed. “Recently, the Callahan Group’s new partnerships have been constantly intercepted and we’ve had to go through a lot of trouble to get them back. I suspect that they’re behind it, but I don’t know why they suddenly started pressuring us and scheming against us.”

Anthony sneered. “There’s never a shortage of ‘whys’.”

In the beginning, out of gratitude for Jaqueline saving his life, he endured and chose to peacefully coexist with Sheldon in secret agreement with him.

Now that Sheldon struck first and even targeted his son in this scheme, this account must be settled.

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Zack instantly understood what he meant. “Alright then, we have to let them know that the Callahan Group isn’t easy to bully.”

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The kindergarten gate was wide open.

The children were divided into several lines obediently waiting excitedly for their parents’ arrival.

The colorful sports track was already set up on the playground.

After a few more minutes passed by, gradually some parents entered into the kindergarten one after another.

Alistair always stood on tiptoe hoping to see his father’s handsome face which would suppress all other dads when he arrived at school.

But every time it wasn’t Anthony.

He waited anxiously yet nervously each time.

Half an hour passed by; almost all other children’s parents were present except him along with few others who were still holding hands of teachers led by the principal.

He couldn’t wait any longer; feeling disappointed every time made him feel unbearable agony inside.

He forcefully released himself from the teacher’s grip and ran out of kindergarten without looking back even though someone was calling after him repeatedly, but he didn’t care about anything else at that moment.

Until finally, he was stopped by the bodyguard who had been hiding outside all along.

“Mr. Alistair where are you going?”

Alistair grabbed onto his sleeve tightly, “Where is my daddy? Is there traffic jam? Can you call him?”

Of course the bodyguard would fulfill Alistair’s request. “Don’t worry. Just wait here.”

After making a phone call which Alistair couldn’t hear properly due being too short heighted, the bodyguard kept saying “Okay”, “Understood”, “Got It”.

After the phone call ended, the bodyguard crouched down and explained, “There’s an urgent matter with Mr. Callahan. He might not be able to come. Can I accompany you instead?”

Alistair slowly released his grip on the bodyguard’s sleeve, feeling his heart sink.

“Did my daddy... did he not receive an invitation to the parent-child sports day at my school?”

“Mr. Callahan definitely received it,” the bodyguard paused mid-sentence, realizing his mistake before quickly adding, “Maybe... maybe he just forgot. After all, Mr. Callahan manages both the company and family affairs. He’s very busy. Can you try to understand him?”

Alistair bit his lip and asked again, “Is Spencer also organizing a sports day at their school campus?”

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Alistair’s face stiffened.

He had only guessed before but didn’t expect that bad woman was really here – still in Daddy’s company...

His Daddy promised him days ago that he wouldn’t have any contact with her anymore.

His Daddy didn’t keep his promises!

The more he thought about it, the angrier Alistair became as he furrowed his eyebrows tightly together.

Sensing Alistair’s bad mood, the Bodyguards tried cheering up him by saying, “Little young master, I’ll accompany you for some fun games inside?”

“No thanks.” He refused without hesitation, “You’re not my daddy or mommy anyway, so why bother joining me?”

Actually though – He should have known better than anyone else by now what kind of father he had been these past two years: never picking him up from school nor accompanying him during parent-child activities held regularly. How could he think this time would be different?

“These boring childish games are just a waste of time for Daddy anyway,” He huffed arrogantly while being extremely sulky; “Forget it! I don’t like these stupid little games either!”

He grumbled while shooing them away rudely, “Just leave me alone already!” With those words spoken out loud, he ran wildly with short legs and entered the kindergarten without looking back. His small figure disappeared among the many children.

The two bodyguards of the Callahan family looked at each other.

“Parent-child activities require both parents to participate. Isn’t this just targeting?”

Another explanation: Actually, when Alistair was only three years old and just started attending the nursery, Mr. Callahan had already participated in this kind of parent-child activity. Because only his father came with him and Mr.

Callahan's face was too handsome, many eyes in the nursery were fixed on him. There were also single mothers who chatted with Mr. Callahan... and so on. Mr. Callahan was worried that it would affect Alistair, so he stopped coming to these meaningless activities.

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Mavis sat at the desk in her hotel room, working remotely on business for a foreign company. She took a sip of coffee from the cup beside her and walked over to the floor-to-ceiling window.

“Moore, we need to secure these partnerships as soon as possible. If we can’t, find a way to delay signing the contract until I return so we can discuss it further.”

“Yes, if profit margins are an issue, I’m willing to lower it by 1.5 points but not less than that. And remember, every point counts when dealing with Lloyd’s Corp.”

“I’m doing well; don’t worry about me. I’ll finish up here soon and maybe...”  
Mavis trailed off as she looked through the window at a small figure in the kindergarten below.

The school was bustling with parents and children participating in activities on the playground but she couldn’t see her son or any sign of Anthony.

“I have an urgent matter to attend to now so let’s follow my instructions from earlier. Thank you for your hard work,” Mavis said before hanging up.

She scanned through the crowd again until she finally spotted Alistair sitting alone on a small bench watching other kids play games during their parent-child activity day.

Although he was too far away for Mavis to see his face clearly, she could sense his loneliness even from this distance.

Where was Anthony? Why wasn’t he there for such an important occasion? Because no parent had shown up yet, Alistair couldn’t participate in any events and had been sitting there quietly watching others compete without him while eating candy sticks.

Mavis felt uneasy seeing her baby boy being treated unfairly like this and decided that something needed to be done about it immediately.

She put down her coffee cup and quickly changed into casual clothes before putting on a black wig disguise along with some accessories that would help conceal her identity just enough not to be noticed by the Callahan family security guards who were patrolling around due to all of the parents being present today. As long as she didn’t reveal too much of herself, then everything should go smoothly.

Inside kindergarten, Alistair remained seated alone on his bench, swinging his legs back-and-forth restlessly while sneaking glances at other children participating in various activities alongside their parents.

Some were making handicrafts together holding hands with mom or dad, while others laughed happily playing games together.

But there were also some naughty kids who got scolded by their fathers, which made them cry loudly only later cheered up again after they rode piggyback style around like horses, which made everyone laugh out loud including himself. Despite still having tears running down his face, he looked comical indeed!

Alistair watched silently, feeling the lollipop in his mouth was not sweet at all. "I'm not jealous at all, I'm so bored," he said.

He threw away the half-eaten lollipop and turned around to block his ears and close his eyes. After all, out of sight, out of mind. Not jealous, not fun!

He muttered to himself as the principal suddenly walked up to him and gently patted his shoulder. "Alistair, your aunt is here. She wants to accompany you for the sports day. Do you agree?"

Aunt? Alistair turned around in shock and saw Mavis standing among a group of parents nearby waving at him. Although she wore a mask, he felt that she must be smiling.

He ran over and hugged her neck when she crouched down. "Why did you come? You said yesterday that you couldn't make it."

"He didn't come so I had to come because nothing is more important than your matters," Mavis lightly touched his nose with hers.

His heart was filled with joy by those words; even breathing became excited but accompanied by worry as he asked anxiously, "This is my first time participating in such a competition; what if I lose?"

"The most important thing is participation; results are not everything but experiencing happiness during this precious moment is what counts most even if we don't win any prizes or awards."

Mavis reassured him while promising him an even more interesting toy as a reward.

"Yay! Mommy rocks!" Alistair exclaimed happily before being corrected by Mavis about calling her "mommy" instead of "aunt."

"Auntie rocks! Yippee!" He shouted louder instead before they both participated together in the next activity called Cotton Ball Game. In this game, blindfolded parents used spoons to scoop cotton balls from bowls without using their hands while kids used anti-slip chopsticks to remove peanuts from bowls with shortest time winning for their family table.

Mavis wore a mask and hat covering almost her entire face, which made Alistair laugh uncontrollably while other parents asked, "Isn't it hot wearing mask and hat on such hot summer days?"

Mavis calmly explained, "I had an allergic reaction on my face two days ago, which caused some rashes so I covered up fearing children might get scared."

The explanation satisfied everyone who stopped asking further questions. Then, eight families started playing cotton ball games simultaneously after hearing whistle blows from the principal's direction.

Alistair was the most skilled at using chopsticks among the group of children. He could easily pick up food with regular chopsticks, and learning to use them was too easy for him.

After all, his ability to hold chopsticks was learned through Anthony's strict supervision.

Picking up peanuts and such was already a piece of cake.

After a small competition ended, Mavis and Alistair had the shortest time.

Mavis was the happiest, pinching her son's face. "Alistair, you're really amazing. You're my pride and joy."

Alistair blushed shyly and giggled in embarrassment. He felt satisfied being praised by his mother like that; if he had a tail, it would probably be wagging happily right now.

"I'm not really that great," he said humbly. "Using chopsticks correctly is just basic skill. I'm too slow at learning things because I'm not very smart. Dad scolded me many times before."

"How can you say you're not smart?" Mavis asked seriously while frowning slightly in concern. "He... he often scolds you?"

Alistair pursed his lips and nodded, "Dad never praises me; he seems to dislike me sometimes but... I am indeed not very bright. I can't even hold chopsticks properly or play piano well or do math without making mistakes..."

Mavis felt distressed listening to him speak like this, so she rubbed her son's little earlobe gently while saying earnestly, "Alistair, you're only five years old yet you can already do math problems! How could you possibly be considered unintelligent? You are clearly my little genius!"

"Really?" Alistair doubted himself slightly as he asked this question.

"Of course it's true! Look at all these other kids here. How many of them can do the math problems? Only my Alistair! If that still makes you feel dumb, then every child in the world must be an idiot," she whispered softly into his ear before adding, "I used to be an idiot when I was your age too."

The last sentence made Alistair laugh out loud as he fidgeted with his clothes' hemline without saying anything else.

Spencer could already solve middle school level math problems when he turned five years old...

Mavis didn't know what exactly her son was thinking about so she rubbed his small head while telling him seriously,

"Alistair, you are my pride and joy; I am proud of having you as my child."

Her pride?

His blue eyes stared intently at Mavis which shone brightly like tiny stars. He

hugged her tightly with his head buried on her shoulder.

“Mom... no wait Auntie, I love love love you~”

Although they haven't spent much time together yet, Alistair felt needed by someone now more than ever before.

There seemed to be some kind of mysterious power within him, which gave him a sense of security deep inside.

Mavis leaned against her son's little head gently while speaking softly, “I love you too – very much.”

Within seconds, she felt her son's body shaking as he began to sob, her shoulders wet with tears.

“Alistair?” She lifted her son's face and saw that his eyes were red and misty.

“What's wrong?”

“Waaah! I don't love daddy anymore, mommy. Daddy is a bad man who doesn't keep his promises!” Alistair was angry and upset, worried that Mavis wouldn't understand the situation. “He went to be with that old lady again. She wants to steal daddy away from us and be our my stepmommy! That's why he took my dad away from me...”

Alistair continued on about the time Bryleigh had scolded him before, waving his arms around in frustration.

Mavis understood what was happening now: Anthony had found someone new in his life and didn't care about their son anymore.

She felt a mix of emotions but remained silent.

“Mommy auntie,” Alistair pleaded with her. “I hate that mean lady so much!

Can you please get daddy back for us? Even though he can be mean sometimes too... he's still my dad!”

Mavis didn't know what to say.