



Chapter 43

I feel completely lost, not knowing what to do. Mel left early, insisted on taking Peter to daycare, and Lygia insisted on spending the day with me. I thought it was great, she's a wonderful person who gave me lots of advice and told me that no hardship lasts forever.

Mel left in the morning and told me not to do anything, saying she would talk to her father and we would decide what to do tonight. But I was uncomfortable with this, I was already imposing too much on the Larsons.

Lygia and I had lunch together, and she told me about her children and grandchildren, none of whom lived in Paradise Port – they all lived too far away for her to see them every week. She told me how happy she was to be able to take care of Peter.

In the afternoon, she went to the market and said she would pick up Peter afterward, telling me to rest, but I took the opportunity to call my parents. I was going to tell them what had happened and that I would be coming home.

The intercom rang, and the doorman informed me that an employee from Group Miller was here with a document for me. I thought it best to go down. It was my termination papers, and inside was an administrative check for my monthly salary. I signed the documents and returned the check, noting in the document that I was waiving any payment – I wouldn't take a single cent from that company. I went back to the apartment and called my parents.

"Catherine, sweetheart! I miss you! How are you all doing?" My mother said happily.



"Oh, Mom, it's not like we don't talk almost every day." I smiled, missing her embrace.

"But we still miss you, honey! Wait, I'll put you on speaker, your father's here." She was so excited. I found it strange that my father was home at this hour, but maybe he had taken a day off.

"My beautiful daughter! How are you? And my little man?" My father spoke cheerfully.

"We're fine, Dad. Peter's still at daycare." I tried to sound calm.

"Honey, it's good you called now, do you have a minute, or are you busy at work?" My father asked, and my eyes welled up with tears.

"I have time, Dad, I'm having coffee. Do you want to tell me something?" I tried not to cry.

"Yes, honey, and I think you'll like the news," my mother was very happy.

"Sweetheart, I've retired! Yesterday was my last day at the company, my boss even threw me a party. He didn't want me to leave, but now that you're settled, I decided it's time to rest," my father said excitedly.

"Dad, that's wonderful, I'm so happy for you! Mom, now you'll have time to travel together." I was genuinely happy for them, but this erased my plans of moving back home.

"And you don't even know the best part - I sold the house and bought a small farm, right here in Bellwood. We're moving this weekend. Now your mother and I are going to live the quiet country life we've always wanted," my father said ecstatically.



Now it was really buried – there was no way I could go back to Bellwood. My parents kept talking for a while about how happy they were and that I should come soon with Peter to visit the farm. We chatted for a bit longer before hanging up.

I buried my head in my hands, thinking about what I would do now. I didn't have the courage to tell my parents that I was unemployed and how I had been humiliated – I wasn't going to ruin their happiness. Now I just had to wait for Mel and follow her plan.

My son came bouncing through the door shouting "mommy, mommy," and my heart overflowed with joy. It had always been like this – ever since he was in my belly, Peter always made me happy. No matter how difficult the situation was, he gave me the strength and courage to face it.

I picked up my son and covered him with kisses. I got up to help Lygia, but she dismissed me and told me to go play with Peter since he had lots to talk about today.

I had already given Peter his bath and we were playing in the living room when he suddenly asked me:

"Mommy, is Alexander coming here today? I wanna play with him."

I froze – I hadn't expected Peter to ask about Alexander. To my relief, Mel arrived and he jumped into her arms. After dinner, I put my son to bed and went back to the living room where Mel said she needed to talk to me.

"Cat, how are you really doing?"

"I'm feeling awful, Mel. When you arrived, Peter had just asked about Alexander."

"Really? But they only met once. Peter doesn't usually remember people



he's only seen once," she said, surprised.

I sighed and told my friend about calling my parents and how our conversation went. I finished by saying I would really need her help now.

"You're so stubborn, aren't you, Catherine? Didn't I tell you I'd help? And I barely had to make any effort - my boss overheard me telling my dad that you were unemployed and he told me to let you know to show up for work tomorrow," Melissa told me excitedly.

"What do you mean, Mel? Does he know what happened?" I asked, confused.

"The gist of it. I told him Alexander thinks you did something you didn't do. He said Alexander is a hot-headed idiot who will regret it, so he thinks it's better if you're working with him when Alexander comes to apologize," my friend said with a smile.

"He's not going to apologize, friend. But he will either prevent your boss from hiring me or get me fired," I said bitterly.

"No, he won't. My boss has already decided. Tomorrow you're coming to work with me."

"Alright, Mel, I'll go and talk to your boss. If he still wants to hire me after that, I'll accept."