

## Chapter 5

I showed up at the company at 8:00 a.m. Mrs. Taylor gave me a warm welcome and introduced me to everyone, and they were all very kind. The boss wasn't there - he was traveling and would return at the end of the week. The office was beautiful, very modern, decorated in white with stainless steel and green accents, managing to be both professional and welcoming. It was elegant, and I really liked it. I was particularly glad I had chosen to wear a black suit with a dark green silk blouse underneath and black heels. I would need to dress elegantly every day now, after all, I would be working directly with the company president.

Mid-morning, I received a message from Mel saying she had managed to schedule an appointment with the director of the daycare near our apartment during lunch hour. I explained the situation to Mrs. Taylor and asked if it would be possible to leave during that time, assuring her I would be back on schedule.

"So you have a child. How old is he?" she asked with a smile.

"He's two years old. He's a very clever little boy. He wasn't planned, but he's the reason for my life!"

"What's his name?"

"Peter."

"Peter. A strong name. You're not married, I know that, but what about your son's father, are you still together?" My heart sank - how could I explain to her that I didn't know who the father was? But I don't lie, so let's face the truth. I told her that Peter's father was someone I met at a party and never saw again. She looked at me seriously, but there was no judgment in her eyes. Then she said:

"You have my respect, Catherine. It's not easy being a single mother, and it's very difficult to tell truths like this when you know they might trigger others' judgment. Thank you for your trust and honesty. Go take care of the daycare arrangements for your son, we'll continue this afternoon - no need to rush."

I thanked her and said goodbye, heading off to meet Mel and Peter. My admiration and respect for Mrs. Taylor only grew. She's a woman in her mid-fifties, with very light blonde hair and almost transparent blue eyes. She's a beautiful and elegant woman, but most importantly, she's very welcoming. We got along very well. During the rest of the morning, she filled me in with information about the work, and I took notes on everything. At lunchtime, I left the building, and Mel was already waiting at the door with Peter. I got in the car, and we went to lunch before heading to the daycare.

Mel and I loved the daycare, and Peter was already fitting in, running around with his new little friends - he's such an outgoing boy. That made me so happy! My son was happy! We decided not to look at other daycares since this one was excellent and very close to home, just three blocks away. We completed the enrollment and sorted out all the details. The director suggested we let Peter stay until the end of the day since he was having fun and could start adapting. Mel agreed to pick him up at the end of the day.

Mel dropped me back at the company and told me she'd head home to prepare for her job interview later in the afternoon. I returned to my office, arriving before Mrs. Taylor. I sat at the desk and started reviewing everything she had already told me. The phone on the desk rang, and I wasn't sure what to do, but since this would be my desk, I answered in my most professional voice:

"Miller Group, Executive Office, good afternoon, how may I help you?"

I heard a deathly silence on the other end followed by a long sigh. Someone spoke up with obvious impatience, in a strong and slightly hoarse voice:

"Put Mariana on."

I was startled but kept my composure and replied:

"I'm sorry, sir, but Mrs. Taylor hasn't returned from lunch yet. May I help you, or would you like to leave a message?"

"Who is this speaking," he asked, even more impatiently.

"My name is Catherine, I'm Mr. Miller's new executive assistant."

"But I don't know you," he seemed to grow more impatient with each word.

"It's my first day here, sir. Would you like to leave a message?"

"Tell Mariana to call me as soon as she sets foot in the office."

"Certainly, sir. And your name is?"

"Looks like I'm your boss!" He snapped and hung up.

Wow, what a stressed-out man! This wasn't in the job description. My throat immediately tightened. Had I already made a bad impression on my boss? I was so screwed! I started thinking I wouldn't last long in this job. Shortly after, Mrs. Taylor arrived and I passed on the message with a worried look on my face. She looked at me with a smile, as if understanding my concern, and asked:

"Was he calm?"

I looked at her and couldn't help myself:

"He was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. I'm pretty sure I could see his jugular vein popping out of his neck."

She burst out laughing and then said:

"You two are going to get along great! You'll tame the beast, I'm sure of it."

I wasn't so sure about that. Maybe I shouldn't even unpack my bags, this man was going to eat me alive!