Chapter 9 The sight of Paisley holding a young girl in her arms sent a sharp icker of tension through Marisyas usually composed gaze .

Marissas mind raced as she struggled to process what she was seeing .

Why does she have a child with her ? Whose child is this ? Judging by her age , she must be around three years old ; Do o you know that little girl ? Marissas voice tightened , the ridge of disbelief creeping in Stella nodded solemnly .

Uh huh .

That naughty kid cling to Sonnys yesterday , saying she was Sonnys little sister Little sister ? Could it be ... Marissa forced herself to maintain composure as her thoights spiraled .

And did Grayson believe her ? Of course not Stella replied con dently , her chin lifting in de ance , Aunt Marissa , didnt you say that every kid who tried to get close to Sonny in school had an ulterior motive ? That was exactly what I told Sonny yesterday , and now he cant stand her Stella paused , her voice tinged with smug satisfaction , Thus , I tol her yesterday .

She deserved it for shamelessly trying to hold Sonnys hand .

Aunt Marissa , wasnt I right to do that ? Marissa exhaled slowly , her mind whirling So Grayson doesnt know this child .

Thats one relief You did the right thing Marissa a rmed , her voice steady as she masked her unease .

Encouraged , she pressed on .

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Did Grayson happen to see this ladys face ! Stella shook her head .

No , he only saw her back yesterday .

I didnt even see her face until just now .

Li Why do you ask .

Aunt Marissa ? She tilted her head in confusion Could it be that Aunt Marissa is worried this pretty lady might wan Sonny over ? Sensing her aunts tension , Stella quickly added , Dont worry .

Sonny loves you .

Youre his favorite .

He keeps saying he cant wait for you to marry Dominick so you can be his mom .

Her attempt to reass to reassure Marissa only deepened her aunts unease .

Marissa couldnt help but wonder far , it seems Grayson hasnt met Paisley .

Hur with both children attending the same school , its only a matter of time .

And that little girl ... bsheaslay and Dominicks child ? Or someone elses Paisley , you scheming wretch .

Ive underestimated you .

Before Marissa could dwell further , Stellas cheerful voice snapped her out of her daze Aunt Marissa , bye .

Im going in now , Stellas bright tone interrupted Marissas thoughts .

The school bell was about to ring , and Stella had just unbuckled her seatbelt , ready to hop out of the car , when Marissa stopped her .

Stella Marissa said steadily , you did a great job yesterday .

At that , Stellas face lit up with pride .

Her little chin lifted , and her twin pigtails bobbed happily as she beamed at the praise .

That girl is getting close to him for a reason , and its not a good one .

Marissa added , her tone turning serious .

You need to keep protecting Sonny Dont let her anywhere near him .

Stella nodded eagerly , her expression solen .

Dont worry , Aunt Marisa .

Ill make sure of it .

And anyway , shes just a new kid in kindergarten a Lule dummy .

Nothing to worry about .

Marissa allowed herself a faint smile at Stellas con dence .

True , shes s just a child .

Even if she has some ulterior motive , what could she do ? Marissas tone turned unusually serious as she looked at Stella .

Do you really want Grayson to nd another best friend ? Someone who might replace you! The weight of her words hit Stella like a bucket of cold water .

She immediately protested , her voice high pitched with alarm , No way .

Sonny only lus me as his best friend .

cuter than you you , Marissa shock her head slowly , as if mulling over a deeper truth .

That little kid is really cute cuter Though young .

Mella wasnt naive : She understood the implication beneath Marissas statement .

Stella thought .

That little brat is cuter than me .

If she sticks around long enough .

Sonny might start liking her , maybe even treating her like family .

And yesterday ... when she tried to hold Sonnys hand , he already started to reach out .

They almost held hands 1/2 Chapter 9 Stellas little face tensed with determination , her brows furrowed in ercie de ance .

No , I dont want Sonny to have another best friend She tugged urgently at Marissas sleeve , her voice pleading .

Aunt Marissa , what should I do ? Can you talk to Dominick and have him get rid of that brat Her eyes sparkled with hope , as if expecting Marissa to sweep the problem away like she always had with troublesome kids at school and kick Serena out .

But this time .

Marissa merely smiled , her expression unreadable .

She didnt directly answer Stellas request , Youre going to be late , Stella .

Youd better get going Some battles didnt require too much prodding This time was di erent .

This problem child wasnt just anyone she was Paisleys daughter .

And for now , Marissa didnt want to alert Dominick unnecessarily .