

## Chapter 3

**Author: Cammy Winslow** 2024-12-13 19:55:16

Pulling myself back to the present, I watched Mandy and Calvin with a grin as I approached. I dabbed at the sweat on Calvin's forehead with a tissue.

"I know how hard you've been hitting the books. Guess what I've got for you!"

Calvin's eyes lit up when he saw the shiny VIP pass to the brand-new amusement park in my hand. He jumped for joy. He wrapped his arms around me in a bear hug.

"Mom, you're the best! Can Dad and Ms. Wood come with us, please?"

James overheard and quickly wrapped Calvin in a protective embrace, worried he might say something he should not. "Calvin's been dying to ride the roller coaster, but he's a bit of a chicken..."

I held Calvin's hand, still smiling. "So, you don't want me to come with you?"

He thought for a second. "Mom, you've got work. You're busy making money for us. I don't want to bug you!"

"See? Calvin's such a good kid. Whenever I take him out, everyone says how polite and smart he is!"

I mused for a moment, "Well, if our little guy is that good, I guess I can take a day off and join the fun!"

My words threw James for a loop, and Mandy quickly signaled him to talk me out of it. He chimed in right away, "Honey, you were up all night. You should sit this one out."

"Mom, get some rest, okay? I'll bring you back a treat when we get home."

I flashed Calvin a grin and said, "Okay, your wish is my command, kiddo!"

Calvin leaped into the air in a burst of joy.

"Mom, I need a new laptop too. The old one's a no-go for gaming!"

I chuckled and gently ruffled his hair.

"You got it, champ. Even if you want the stars in the sky, I'd find a way to snag them for you!"

Calvin was over the moon. He kept bouncing around, tugging James with one hand and Mandy with the other.

A pang of annoyance hit me hard. They looked like the picture-perfect family, all smiles and sunshine, while I felt like the villain hogging their happy ending.

The truth was, when I first took Calvin in, I poured my heart into raising him. I never wanted the bad blood between James, Mandy, and me to taint an innocent kid.

However, this kid... He wasn't worth my heart. Ever since he started thinking Mandy was his real mom, he practically wrote me off.

All he was doing was biding his time, waiting to cash in on my demise and snatch up the inheritance.

Well, if that was how it was going to be, I wouldn't play nice anymore.