

## Chapter 4

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

James and Mandy had always believed in staying under the radar, thinking it was the safest bet. When I was home, they played it cool. They kept their distance and acted as if their relationship was just like that of any other employer and maid.

However, when they saw I was not biting, Mandy started acting like she owned the place. She would even have James chauffeur her around for grocery runs.

The new neighborhood security guard? He was convinced she was Mrs. Carter.

However, it worked for me. It gave me the perfect cover to jet off and visit my own flesh and blood.

Mandy knew darn well that seafood was off-limits for me due to my allergies. However, every time I came home, there would be a seafood feast waiting.

"Mrs. Carter, Calvin's in crunch time with his studies. I've heard from the experts that seafood's brain food because of all that protein!"

If it was not one thing, it was another—like the time I caught a nasty cold and Mandy quarantined me in my room like I was patient zero.

"Mrs. Carter, Calvin can't fall ill right now. If he skips school now, he'll fall behind!" she insisted.

I knew she was just trying to one-up James and keep her son under her thumb, but I kept my mouth shut.

I watched their daily dramas unfold and saw Calvin grow more defiant by the day. His ears were practically tuned only to Mandy's voice.

It all came to a head with just a hundred days to go before the final school exam, when Calvin threw a fit and declared he was done with school.

That was the day James lost it and actually slapped Calvin.

"You want to drop out? What's your plan, then? To live life clueless and uneducated?"

Calvin, now a towering six-footer, retreated into Mandy's embrace. He was the picture of wounded pride.

"Calvin, you should listen to your dad. Sure, we're loaded, but you've got to have some skills of your own," she coaxed.

"No way. We're rolling in dough. Why bother with school? I'm not going to slog away like some poor sap. Once Mom hands me the company, I'll be in charge," he shot back.

I was still groggy from burning the midnight oil at work when their shouting match in the living room jolted me awake.

Bleary-eyed, I trudged downstairs.

"What's all this racket about so early in the morning?" I grumbled.

James glared at me as I descended. "Your precious son here is throwing a tantrum about not finishing school and not sitting for the exams. You need to straighten him out!"

I slumped into the couch and motioned for Mandy to warm up some milk for me.

"And here I thought it was the end of the world. He just doesn't want to take the exams. I've been saying we should send him abroad to ease off the pressure. You wouldn't hear of it!"

Calvin shot James a look of deep resentment.

"It's not the same. I was at the top of my class, so my son's not going to fall short. I'm not on board with this going abroad idea! Even when he's at home, he barely cracks a book. If he goes abroad, he'll totally go off the rails!"

Mandy passed me the milk with a concerned look.

"Mrs. Carter, I've got to side with Mr. Carter on this one. Having the kid at home just feels safer!"

I shot Calvin with a sympathetic grimace.

"Your dad's not budging, and I can't bail you out this time, kiddo. Better hit those books! But here's the deal—I promise if you nail college and graduate, I'll hand you the keys to the company. I'll step back and go globetrotting with your dad!"

They all beamed at my words, lost in their happy daydreams.

Just then, my phone buzzed with a new message: [Mom, I made it into Clarendon University. I'm over the moon!]

I grinned at them and shot back a message to my son: [Son, I'm so proud of you!]

Suddenly, I was the one counting down the days with the most excitement.