

The Kiss 471

Chapter 471

As Balfour was munching away he let out a vague grunt. It was like he kinda replied to her yet also like he wasn't really listening. Even though he was polite, he seemed really cold and distant.

While he was eating Balfour got a call and then he just took

Haillie felt a bit worried to see Balfour leave. He'd only had a few bites and then he was out the door again. Was it because her food didn't suit his taste?

Patricia saw Haillie's unease and re

ured her. "Ha

brothers always like that. He often forgets to eat because of work. Don't overthink it.

Haillie nodded, feeling a bit better.

Changing the subject,

ked By

birthday party is tomorrow. Have you decided what dress you're gonna wear?"

Haillie was taken aback; she had completely forgotten.

Patricia got what Haillie was hinting at. "Don't w

Haile laughed. Patricia

Du've been my brother's date

you have to bring a date to the birthday party? Has Balfour found a date this year?"

this year won't be any different.

"But since you just got out

new dress

about I go with you to buy a nice one, maybe it'll catch my brother's eye."

"That

awesom

Only then did

remember

in her arms, who was yawning and struggling to keep his eyes open.

After a while

Ellinor was
Patricia walked up
and sat
in the CT's office together
"Ms Ellinor looked up
and serio
Patricia pleaded again. It's just for a
and I need to pop out for a bit, could you please watch the kid for a while?
and. "Sorry, babysitting is not in job descriptio
sle, we just w
stairs, and I also need to buy some stuff for
the kid
Ellinor replied Ms Howard, you
brother Would
be better?
Patricia looked troubled. But the kid's ready asleep, and my brothers, not here
plus. he has no clu
Ellinor engrossed in her work, didn't soften up to Patricia's request and just smiled. can't help you
her. Eve got
do, and I don't have the time I'm sorry, I
with you to pick
dress, you should
"Alright, never mind then Patricia regretfully lowered her ask another friend to go with you!
ligned, then turned to
and sa
Haillie couldn't stand Ellinor's cold attitude. Patricia, Ellinor is an employee of your company.
hat right does st
ave to refuse your reque

Patricia looked up with those innocent, helpless eyes that made you wanna shield her from the world, like a harmless little deer. "But.."

Haillie got up, rapped lightly on Ellinor's desk, then crossed her arms and said in a haughty tone, Listen up, Ellinor! The kid's asleep on the couch in Balfour's office Patricia and I are stepping out for a bit, but we'll be back soon! If anything happens to the kid while we're gone, it's on you!"

Ellinor didn't even bother to look up and was ready to refuse

But Haillie didn't give her the chance and took Patricia's hand 'Let's go, Patricia'

Ellinor frowned, looking up just in time to see Patricia and Haillie's backs disappear into the elevator

Ellinor was dumbfounded

Haillie's actions were understandable, but Patricia was a mother How could she just hand her child over to a stranger so easily?

Something about this just didn't sit right

But whatever, it was none of Ellinor's business what Patricia did

However, with Me Howard out and a kid alone in the office it was definitely not safe

After some thought, Ellinor took her laptop and headed to the CEO's office

The little boy just as Haillie had said was sound asleep on the couch covered with Patricia's coat

Not wanting to wake him, Ellinor tiptoed over and placed her laptop on the table

Then she sneaked to Balfour's desk, pulled out the mini high resolution camera she brought along, and took a picture of the framed photo of a mother on the desk. After snapping the pic, she tucked the camera away

Ellinor returned to the couch, sat at a distance from the little boy, and continued her translation work, occasionally glancing at the boy to check if he was awake or if he'd fallen off

During this time, Balfour didn't return, and in a blink, over an hour had passed, and Ellinor finally finished her translation task and stretched.

Seeing that the boy was still asleep, she decided to rest

for a bit too

Not long after, she heard the boy crying and immediately looked over

Patricia's son had woken up and was sitting up looking around as if searching for his mother

When he saw Ellinor, he suddenly looked terrified and burst into tears

Ellinor was taken aback by his sudden crying and felt at a loss

Even though she was pregnant, she had no experience when it came to calming a child

"Uh... Your mom will be back soon, don't cry!"

A one-year-old couldn't really talk or understand adult words, so he didn't stop crying

When Ellinor tried to get up to comfort him, he only cried harder at the sight of her approaching, as if she were some scary monster

Not knowing what else to do, Ellinor stopped in her tracks, "Okay, I won't come any closer, can you stop crying now?"

He completely ignored her and climbed off the couch wobbling towards the door.

Ellinor couldn't let a small child run out alone, so she quickly followed, "Wait..

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At that moment, Patricia, and Haillie were sauntering in with shopping bags and chatting away.

"Patricia, that dress you helped me pick out is just gorgeous, I love it! I'm gonna wear it to the birthday party tomorrow!

"Yeah, I think it's stunning too! Haillie, you'll surely amaze everyone when you strut in with that dress tomorrow!"

"Whoa!" The kid saw his mom coming back and couldn't contain his excitement, he bolted towards her like a cannonball, tripped, landed face first on the floor, and began bawling his eyes out

Patricia nearly jumped out of her skin at the sight. She rushed over and picked him up off the floor, 'What happened?"

The child clung to her neck, seeking solace in her arms, but kept crying

"Honey, tell Mommy what's wrong. Are you feeling unwell?"

The one year-old didn't know how to express his feelings other than by crying

Patricia got worried. She examined his body and rolled up his sleeves. She found his arm full of bruises, scary ones!

Patricia's heart ached so much that her eyes welled up immediately. "How could this have happened?"

The child just cried as his tiny body trembled

Haillie was shocked by the bruises too, and then she turned her accusing gaze to the only other person in the room

"You! Ellinor, you must have abused our child while we were gone!!

I didn't Ellinor was puzzled.

Haillie glared at her, 'Oh, you say you didn't and that's it? You were the only one with the child. If it wasn't you, who else could it be?"

Ellinor remained calm, "Haillie, accusations require proof

Haillie sneered Proof? You cant prove that you weren't here, that's the best proof

Patricia cradled her son as tears streamed down her face. She looked at Ellinor as her voice choked with sorrow and anger, "Ellinor, I asked you to watch my child only for a while. How could you do this to a child? I trusted you..."

Trust? Patricia said she trusted her? What a joke!

Ellinor instantly realized that this was a trap set by Patricia when she saw her hypocritical performance

Who would have thought Patricia could be so ruthless and take advantage of her own son?!

Just then, Balfour came back from his work, walking in on his sister and nephew crying. He frowned. "What happened?"

Patricia flung herself into her brother's arms and continued crying inconsolably.

Balfour was puzzled Patricia, what's going on?"

Haillie marched forward angrily. "Balfour, good you're here! Ellinor has been mistreating the child while Patricia and I were out! Look at all the bruises she left on him, he's been crying from the pain! It's heartbreaking!"

With that, Haillie lifted the child's shirt for him to see

Balfour's brows furrowed even more when he saw the patchy marks on the child's body. His gentle eyes turned cold as he glared at Ellinor, 'Ms. Mendoza, have you lost all your humanity? How can you be so cruel to a child?"

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Ellinor wasn't surprised that Balfour would believe

Here's the deal. Mr Howard About an hour ago.

Despite my repeated refusals.

wing to

they came

she calmly stated her side of the story

and

told me they were going shopping and asked me to babysit

Is kid sleep. I never laid a finger on that child

As for the bruises on him,

After hearing Ellinor's words.

do this to

Haillie angrily said. Balfour

knows what Ellinor would I

Balfour gla

Patricia, holding her child,

hospital i

Ellinor glanced

Balfour looke

Yes Ellinor calmly nodded.

soon as I entered th

ms and blamed herself “Br, it’s my fault. I shouldn’t have left my child with your secretary I never

the child was scared, crying and trying to run away. If we had come bac a bit later, who

Child abuse is a serious crimel

gaze bar

‘Do you have any proof

didn’t!

child”

sobbing. “Ellinor why why did you do

child”

sa and Theo and you

out on the child’

is more concerned with ur

irst reaction is to rush the child to

with her child’s

vid’s injuries! Ära call a

child’s injuries. Balfour and I care too

he child to the

At this. Pampiās ey

was surprised. Could t

(by Ellinor?

Balfour squinted.

Ellinor pointed Mi Hai

Plus the surveillais e, atera at

in ther child right?

atie to explain if anything happened. I started recording on my phone

that I never tow hed Ms. Howard's child once

Hearing Ellinors explanation, Balfour patted his

ster on

The phone was indeed recording Balfour

Then Balfour came back, handed the phone to Ellinor and sa It seems thi. Mendoza is innocent

cordova an

cording sti

video right now

ith no gaps. The playback will show

went to

ss of Ellinor babysitting in the

sone from his

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Balfour looked at Patricia with confusion. "Patri, are you saying that the kid was already injured before he came to the office? What the heck happened? Who's been around the kid at home"

Upon hearing her brother's question, Patricia felt guilty as hell and tears started falling from her face.

Yes, she had intentionally caused the kid's injuries to frame Ellinor and get Balfour to fire her.

Haillie was a witness she had brought in on purpose to stir up trouble

But she never expected Ellinor to be so cautious and record the whole incident on her phone.

Patricia hid her guilt behind her crying. "Bro... I have no idea! How could this happen? Who would be so cruel as to hurt such a small child? Maybe the nanny who's responsible for looking after him did it because she thought he was too naughty when I wasn't around."

Child abuse was something that needed to be dealt with seriously!

Balfour's expression hardened, "Call the police! We must investigate all the nannies, maids, and childcare workers who have been in contact with the kid recently!" Seeing her brother make this decision, Patricia was afraid her actions would be discovered, but she didn't dare voice her opposition, which would make her look even more suspicious. She decided to think of a plan when she got home.

She wiped her tears and turned to Ellinor with the kid, looking very apologetic, "Ellinor, I'm sorry! | blamed you just now because I was really worried about the kid"" Ellinor gave a slight smile, "It's okay. It's not the first time you've blamed me wrongly

Patricia went pale and had nothing to say

Haillie glared at Ellinor and said angrily, "Patricia has apologized to you, what kind of attitude is this? Don't be ungrateful!"

Ellinor ignored Haillie and said to Patricia, "Ms. Howard, you seem very worried about the kid. You should take your son to the hospital to check his injuries soon!"

"Okay, thank you for your concern, Ellinor We'll go right now!" Patricia pretended to be very anxious and said to Balfour, 'Bro, Hailler and I will take the kid to the hospital for a check-up first; you're busy with work; you don't need to come with us!"

Balfour indeed had important work to handle and he had already sent Quinton to run errands. He was worried about his sister and nephew, so he turned to Ellinor and seriously instructed her, "Ms Mendoza, please accompany Patri and the others to the hospital and let me know if anything happend."

"Okay, Mr. Howard." Although Ellinor was reluctant, she couldn't disobey her boss's orders on her first day at work.

She got this job with great difficulty, and she had to make a good impression at the Howard Group to continue her investigation into her mother's affairs

Children's hospital.

The place Ellinor disliked the most was the hospital, as it affected her mood.

Patricia didn't let her into the examination room, so she could only wait in the hallway for them.

Later, Patricia sent Haille out to buy a bottle of water for the kid.

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Haille initially planned to let Ellinor run this errand, but she was worried that Ellinor might have other intentions and might mess with the kid's water. She gave Ellinor a peeved glance and decided to get the water herself.

A while later. Patricia emerged from the clinic with her son.

The worry lines you'd expect on a mom's face when her child was injured were absent from Patricia's pretty face. Instead, she even flashed a sweet smile at Ellinor.

"Ellinor, you're quite something, you know! You just breezed through my meticulously set trap!"

Ellinor wasn't surprised at Patricia showing her true colors, but it made her see Patricia in a new light.

Before. Ellinor just thought Patricia was two faced and cunning, but now she realized that this seemingly harmless woman was even worse than she thought.

Using her young and mute son like this was just despicable!

Ellinor chuckled coldly, 'Don't flatter me, I'm not as ruthless as you. You even dare to harm your own son, aren't you afraid his father will find out?'"

Patricia, still smiling radiantly, responded confidently. His father won't find out! The doctor just said that the kid has the same allergic constitution as you and that his bruises are caused by exposure to unknown allergens. That's it! If anyone else asks, the doctor will say the same"

Ellinor was momentarily stunned but quickly understood. Patricia must have bribed the doctor when she sent Haillie away.

She looked at the little boy in Patricia's arms, who looked panicked and overly obedient, and she couldn't help but feel pity

Poor kid, he was unlucky to have such a mother

"How could you do this to your own son?"

Patricia was unfazed, still smiling sweetly at her obedient son. "Ellinor, you don't need to worry about me. You can leave now. Theo will come to pick us up soon!"

At the mention of Theo, Ellinor felt a pang in her chest.

She took a deep breath, brushed off the uncomfortable feeling and professionally said to Patricia, "Mr. Howard instructed me to ensure you and your son are safe before I leave, so I'll wait until Theo comes and picks you up and see it with my own eyes"

Patricia frowned suspiciously when she saw Ellinor had no intention of leaving. "Ellinor, I thought you didn't want Theo to see you? Why are you insisting on waiting for him now? Have you changed your mind and want to seduce Theo again?"

Ellinor laughed lightly. Rest assured, I won't appear in Mr Blanchet's line of sight. I just need to confirm that you and your son were indeed taken away by Mr. Blanchet, so I have an explanation to give to Mr. Howard, that's all

Patricia eyed Ellinor suspiciously and was still somewhat defensive and uneasy. "Ellinor, you'd better not pin too much hope on Theo, or else..."

Before Patricia could finish her threat, Haillie, who had gone to buy water, came back, "Patricia, why are you out? What did the doctor say about the child condition?"

Patricia immediately changed her expression, once again playing innocent in front of her friends, "Haillie, don't worry, the doctor just said Baber is just allergic, not abused" "Allergic To what? We need to find out what the allergen is and avoid it in the future!" Haillie handed a bottle of water to Patricia

Patricia took the water and nodded, "Yes, the nurse will come and take his blood for allergen testing later!"

"So what happens to Baber now?"

*The doctor said he needs to stay in the hospital for an IV"

Upon hearing that Patricia wanted to put the kid on an IV, Ellinor couldn't help but furrow her brows. The kid was clearly not allergic; it didn't seem right to give him an IV for that, right?

How could Patricia torture her child like this?

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It looked like Haillie even cared more about the kid's health than his own mom. Patricia.

Children's ward

Baber, with tears in his eyes, was lying on the bed According to Patricia's instructions, he extended his hand for the nurse to give him an IV

The little guy was so well behaved that he did not even resist or make a fuss about the IV

Ellinor felt uneasy and walked over to check the prescription Patricia's doctor had given Haber

It was just some saline and nutrients, there were no other complex medicines.

But it was not suitable for such a small child to just casually get an IV. Could he handle this kind of hassle?

As a pregnant woman who was about to become a mother. Ellinor couldn't help but want to say something when she saw Patricia exploiting a child like this

Just then, Patricia's phone suddenly rang She quickly picked it up and said softly

"Thea, you're here! We're in ward 602. on the 6th floor of the inpatient department, Baber's getting an IVI

Hearing that Theo was here. Ellinor was startled and didn't get to say what she wanted to. She immediately hid in the bathroom of the ward

A hint of satisfaction flashed in Patricia's eyes She didn't want Theo to see Ellinor

Haillie was also worried that Ellinor would try to seduce Theo, but after seeing her hide in the bathroom like she'd seen a ghost, she felt relieved that Ellinor had the sense

to stay out of the way

Not long after someone pushed the door open and walked into the ward.

The man's steps were steady and he asked seriously. What's wrong with the child?"

Patricia pretended to cry and responded softly. "Theo, it's okay, the doctor said Baber just has a bit of an allergy! I only called you because I was too nervous. I didn't interrupt your work did

"No" Theo walked towards the bed, looking at Baber, who was already on the IV

Patricia added Theo, don't worry, the doctors all say Baber will be fine!*

Theo replied, then headed towards the bathroom, "That's good, I need to use the bathroom"

Hearing the man say he needed to use the bathroom, both Patricia and Haillie's faces changed, and their eyes widened in anxiety

Ellinor was hiding in that bathroom!

Theo walked to the bathroom door, put his hand on the doorknob, and found the door was locked.

Theo frowned, "Is someone in there?"

Inside the bathroom, Ellinor's heartbeat sped up.

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Patricia knew Theo had been having Collin search for Ellinor non-stop for the past month.

She could even predict that if Theo saw Ellinor now, something she didn't want to happen would definitely happen. What if they cleared up the misunderstanding about the child on the spot?

No, she had worked so hard to push Ellinor away from Theo that she couldn't just stand by and watch them get back together

Patricia's mind was racing, there were some things she couldn't bring up directly, so she deliberately tugged at Haillie's hand

Caught off guard by Patricia's sudden grip, Haillie initially froze. But then she turned to see Patricia's helpless, pitiful expression and couldn't help but feel sympathetic and an idea popped into her head.

"Ballour's in the restroom; I think it was Balfour who went in just now Haillie quickly explained.

Balfours inside?

Theo pulled his hand off the doorknob and turned around ready to head to the restroom in the hallway

But before he could open the door, the ward door was pushed open from the outside, and Balfour walked in straight, "Patri, how's Baber?"

Patricia and Haillies faces changed again when they saw Balfour come in

Oh my god! Why did Balfour have to show up now?

They were totally busted, weren't they?!

Theo paused, looking at Balfour, then glanced at the locked restroom, squinting in thought.

Balfour, clueless about what had just happened, nodded at Theo in greeting. Then, you're here too."

Theo didn't respond to Balfour but instead turned to Haillie, demanding. "Who's really in the restroom?"

Patricia and Haillie exchanged embarrassed looks, both hesitating and stuttering unable to say a word.

Seeing the unusual atmosphere, Balfour quickly guessed what was going on and said, "Quinton's inside. Theo, if you need the restroom, just turn left outside"

Quinton

Theo stared at the restroom door for a few seconds, and the suspicion in his eyes gradually faded

He never would've thought that the girl he'd been desperately searching for for over a month was just behind that door.

There was a hint of fatigue in Theo's eyes, 'Balfour, since you're here, I'll leave the child and Patricia to you. I have to catch a flight, so I'm leaving first"

Seeing Theo about to leave, Balfour frowned in discontent, thinking this guy was too irresponsible and did not care about Patri and the baby at all.

As Theo turned to open the door. Patricia ran up to him again, grabbing his sleeve.

Then"

Theo stopped and looked at her, "What now?"

Patricia looked up at him tenderly and said considerately. Then, it's getting colder and colder, make sure to dress warmly when you're on your trip."

Theo nodded, "You too, take care of yourself and the baby"

Patricia smiled obediently. "Don't worry, I will Theo, when you come back from your trip. Baber will be better."

Without saying anything else. Theo opened the door and left.

Her beloved man had left, and though Patricia was reluctant to see him go, now was not the right time to keep Theo around because Ellinor was still hiding in the restroom.

Thinking of Ellinor, a malicious smile crept onto Patricia's face as she glanced towards the restroom door

Just now, Ellinor must have heard her and Theo's caring farewells from inside, she must be green with envy, huh?

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Ellinor better get a grip and never show up in Theo's sight again!

"Come out! He's gone."

After Theo left, Balfour coldly called out to the bathroom.

A few seconds later, the bathroom door opened and Ellinor came out, bowing to Balfour, "Mr. Howard, thanks for showing up just in time to get me out of a jam" Balfour glanced at her without responding. He then went to the bedside to check on Baber, who was on an IV. He touched the kid's forehead to see if he had a fever and looked at his face to see if anything was off. Seeing that everything seemed normal, he felt a bit relieved.

Patricia came over, "Baber's okay. He just had a little allergic reaction. You don't have to investigate the nannies; it's not their fault."

"Good, as long as the kid is fine." Balfour nodded, then turned to Patricia with a serious face, "Patry, this is your first time being a mom, you need to learn more. Kids aren't easy to raise, once you've got em, you've gotta take responsibility, Baber is after all..."

Just as Balfour was about to spill the beans about Baber being adopted, Patricia cut him off, "I know, I've been reading parenting books and will learn to be a good mom! But aren't you super busy? Why are you here? Baber's fine now, you should get back to the office. Don't let work pile up!"

Balfour couldn't rest easy, so he rushed to the hospital to check on things after wrapping up some work.

Seeing that Patricia and the kid were all good, he felt relieved. "Patri, you and Haillie stay here with Baber. I'll send someone to pick you up later."

Patricia nodded, "Alright!"

As Balfour was about to leave, Haillie remembered something important and signaled Patricia.

Patricia caught Haillie's hint and remembered, "Oh right, Balfour, tomorrow is Aunt Bluna's birthday, have you got her present ready?"

"Yep, all set"

"What about your date? You haven't picked one yet, have you?"

Balfour looked subtly amused. Seeing Haillie's expectant face, he knew what she was up to, "I've got someone in mind for my date. Patri, you don't have to worry about me."

Hearing this, Haillie's expression quickly shifted from anticipation to disappointment.

Patricia was also surprised, "You've already picked someone? Who is it?"

Balfour paused for a moment, then said, "Ms. Mendoza,"

"Huh?" Ellinor, standing nearby, was taken aback.

What did this have to do with her?

Then she caught Balfour's intimidating gaze.

Ellinor was a smart cookie, and even though she didn't want to, she had to accept it now, "Yes! I'm Mr. Howard's date!"

Haillie frowned and glared at Ellinor

Patricia was also very surprised. Balfour, you and Ellinor..."

"Alright, you two take good care of Baber Balfour cut Patricia off. He didn't want to stick around any longer, "Ms. Mendoza, you come with me back to the office."

Ellinor responded, "Yes, Mr. Howard!"

In the car back to the Howard Group, Ellinor sat quietly in the passenger seat.

In the back seat, Balfour suddenly asked, 'Ms. Mendoza, are you scared of meeting Theo?

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"I'm not scared or anything I just don't want to stir up unnecessary trouble and mess with Patricia and Mr. Blanchet's relationship."

Ellinor responded, glancing at Balfour's handsome face in the rear view mirror.

Balfour chuckled softly, "So you think just by showing up in front of Theo, you'll shake things up for Patricia and her fiancé?"

Staring at the passing scenery outside the window, Ellinor calmly said, "There might be a slight disturbance."

"Ms. Mendoza, where do you get the confidence to think you can match up with Patri?"

Faced with his sarcasm, Ellinor stayed cool and cracked a smile.

"Mr. Howard, it's only natural that you think your beloved Ms. Howard is incomparable. Just like, even though you're amazing in my eyes, you still can't beat the dog I've raised since it was a puppy. It's the same logic!"

The driver had to clamp his mouth shut, afraid that he would burst out laughing at Ms. Mendoza's words.

However, the next second, a chill ran down his spine as he felt Mr. Howard's displeasure.

He had been driving for Mr. Howard for over a decade and he had never seen any employee talk back to Mr. Howard like that

Balfour stared at Ellinor in the rear view mirror, 'Then tell me, in what way do you think you can compare to Patri?"

Ellinor might seem young and naive, but her mind was incredibly mature. She never let others' doubts, sarcasm, or mockery shake her confidence

She exuded confidence, not the blind kind, but the kind that came with a clear understanding and affirmation of herself..

It was the resilience she had honed through hardship, the fearlessness she had molded in adversity, and the indifference to others' opinions and judgments that made her like this

'I don't have a privileged background like Ms. Howard, no powerful family, no doting relatives, and I'm not a carefully cultivated beauty like a greenhouse flower. The biggest difference between Ms. Howard and me is that she is a delicate flower under your protection, while I am a lone sprout growing wildly on a cliff.

Ms. Howard is undoubtedly the favored child of fortune, born to rely on a robust tree like you, blessed with the suitable environment and fertile soil of the Howard family. However, my upbringing has made me learn to rely on myself to grow into a tree that can support me because there's no one for me to lean on forever.

Throughout my life, I've weathered various storms, and no matter the circumstance, I've always been able to get by on my own experiences and abilities. Therefore, I believe that both Ms. Howard and I have our strengths, and neither of us is inferior to the other

Balfour looked at the girl in the front seat through the rear-view mirror. This was the first time he saw such a vibrant glow in a girl and felt the tenacity she radiated.

That powerful and composed vitality was indeed something Path lacked.

However, Patri didn't need that extra toughness. As long as he was there, Patri could easily enjoy all the best things in this world.

Balfour didn't argue with Ellinor anymore. He closed his eyes to rest, 'I hope your self assessment is accurate and you can indeed grow into an unyielding tree.' "Thanks for your kind words" Ellinor smiled.