

The Love that Never Really Dies
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Since Sebastian had made it explicit that he wanted Sasha out of Avenport, the bodyguard had no choice but to do as he was asked to. After sorting things out with the bodyguard, Sebastian went upstairs again and got ready for work. Just as he was about to leave his room, his phone rang again. He groaned and picked it up. "What is it?" he asked impatiently.

"Mr. Hayes, you don't care about your son anymore, do you? I'll kill your son if you dare hang up again!" Sebastian rolled his eyes at the familiar voice. "Hey, what do you want? Money? If you're thinking about ripping me off, dream on. I have no time for games!" Sebastian's patience was wearing thin. The day sure did not start well with these annoying calls bothering him.

"It seems like you don't believe that I have your son, Mr. Hayes. Fine then, I'll send you a picture of him, and you can take a look for yourself. Make sure you come prepared with one billion!" The kidnapper hung up without waiting for a reply. Sebastian stared at his phone in disbelief before the screen lighted up again. He just received a photo from the man.

Instantly, he tapped on it and zoomed in on the child. It was indeed a photo of a child being held hostage. Sebastian could not tell where the place was, but the kid in an orange jacket was bound up with thick ruffian ropes on a small chair.

His complexion was fair, and his cheeks were chubby. Although his eyes were covered with a rugged black cloth, his mouth and his nose were still visible. Sebastian squinted his eyes at the boy, perplexed. Well, this sure looks like Ian. But Ian is in my room. Sebastian headed

out of the room with his eyes on his phone, still taken aback by how much the boy in the photo looked so similar to his son. He was so surprised he did not even notice Ian was already out of bed and was standing by the staircase leading to the second floor. Still in a daze, Ian stared at him blankly with his Transformers toy in his hand. Sebastian heaved a sigh of relief when he saw Ian. He deleted the photo in his phone and bolted down the stairs towards Ian. "I didn't know you're awake. Why didn't you change out of your pajamas?" Sebastian reached out toward him, wanting to bring him back to his room for a change. But Ian took a step back and looked at Sebastian, his face white as a sheet. "Were you on the phone with someone, Daddy? I heard someone got kidnapped." Sebastian was astonished Ian actually overheard his call. He waved his hand dismissively, saying,

"It's nothing. You heard it wrong. It's a call from the office." "I know what I heard, Daddy. Someone said your son has been kidnapped, right?" Ian looked at Sebastian in the eyes with his hands clenched up tightly as he reiterated his question. "Well, yeah... But you're here, so it must be a prank call." Sebastian shrugged his shoulders, not understanding why his son was so worked up. The boy stood there quietly, and his body started quivering. For a moment, Sebastian thought he was seeing things. Ian seemed disconcerted, and his face was so pale. "Are you okay, Ian? Did you catch a cold?" Sebastian dropped the topic and went closer, wanting to bring Ian back to the room. "Let's go get changed, okay? You're gonna catch a cold if you're dressed so thinly." Ian sprang away from him instantly and dashed down the staircase towards the door.

Sebastian was totally taken aback seeing the boy running amok. "Ian! Come back! What's wrong with you?" Sebastian darted after him, his furious voice reverberating along the staircase. Seriously, I really have to teach this boy a good lesson! Since when is he this rebellious? Sebastian chased after Ian and finally caught him at the collar and tugged him back in. "What do you think you're doing, Ian Hayes? Do you want to stand in the corner?" Sebastian bellowed at the wild child. "Let me go! I want to go and find Ms. Nancy! Let me go!" Ian screamed and kicked all he could to free himself from Sebastian's grip. Even his voice was wobbling and breaking into tears. He knew something must have happened to Matteo.

Thus, he had to find Mommy and see if everything was okay. After he got home yesterday, he tried calling Matteo when he finally got a grip of himself, but none of his calls went through. Ian called him again in the morning, but still, he could not reach Matteo. That was when Ian knew something must have gone wrong. Hence, he was stunned when he overheard the call at the staircase. Did someone mistake Matteo for me? Did someone kidnap him? Guilt came eating him up from the inside as these questions spun in his mind.

He huffed and puffed, trying to break free from Sebastian. His shrieks and struggles infuriated Sebastian. The enraged father was on the verge of slapping the kid in his face to make him calm down.

But Sebastian could not bring himself to do it. He felt helpless looking at Ian demanding to go back to Sasha. Why does he insist on going back to that woman? After everything I've done to make sure she stays away from him, he still wants to go back to her even when he

doesn't know she's his mother. Is there really such a thing as an inexplicable bond between a mother and her child? Sebastian let out a sigh and finally caved. "Fine. I will bring you to her, but you have to promise me you'll go get changed. You can't go out wearing your pajamas." "I'll go right now!" Ian cried out and instantly rushed upstairs. Behind the boy, Sebastian raised his brows in resignation and shook his head. Whatever. This will be the last time he's

seeing her anyway. And this time, I will make sure I get this point across when I see her. She will never be seeing Ian again. While waiting, Sebastian craned his neck impatiently and went upstairs to get his car keys.

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Ian got ready within ten minutes, and the two headed to Old Town. Sebastian never probed into where Sasha was living as he had always thought she was staying with her uncle. After all, that was what she told him. It was not until today that he found out that Sasha actually lied to him and that she had found another place to stay. This obviously did not set Sebastian in a good mood. Thus, he drove Ian to Old Town without saying a word. This neighborhood is simply too squalid and slummy. His nose wrinkled in disgust as he looked around. Beside him, Ian's reaction was totally different. As the car drove nearer to Sasha's place, Ian poked his head out of the window and looked around in expectation. He was looking for her, and Sebastian could tell from his actions that his son could not wait to see her. That little boy was scanning the area meticulously, trying to get a sign of his mother. Sebastian eyed the eager kid from the corner of his eyes and pursed his lips. Too bad this is

the last time she gets to see Ian. The car drove towards an apartment, but Sebastian could not find a place to park since a large crowd had gathered at the entrance. Right in the middle of the group was a little girl who was holding a stranger's hand. The person was trying to calm her down. Vivi!

The moment Ian spotted her, he asked Sebastian to stop the car. He then jumped off immediately and ran over, pushing his way through the crowd. "Vivi!" he shouted with all his strength. Vivian turned her head around, trying to locate the direction of the familiar voice. Her frightened gaze wandered around aimlessly. Ian! Ian's here! The moment Vivian saw Ian, she let go of the man's hand and darted toward Ian. She ran as she tried to hold back her tears welling up in her eyes. "Ian! You're here!" She planted herself right in his open arms. Vivian was terrified after a whole night of anxious waiting. Sasha did not come home, and neither did her two brothers. This was the biggest fright of her life. When she finally saw a familiar face, she could not hold it in any longer. Ian instantly realized the despair on her face and welcomed his sister into his embrace. A frown of disdain settled on Sebastian's brows as he looked at the little girl in Ian's arms. Isn't this the girl I saw at the hospital yesterday? She's the illegitimate daughter of that woman. "What's the matter? Why are you here? Where's your mother?" Regardless of the aversion Sebastian felt towards the girl, he went closer and asked her what all this mess was about.

Beckoned by a stern and unfamiliar voice, Vivi looked up and hid behind Ian.

Both Sebastian and Ian suddenly became speechless.

After a while, Ian turned around and asked gently, "Vivi, what happened? Where is Matt?"

Vivi stole a timid look at Sebastian and then at her brother before finally talking again. "Matt came home after you left yesterday. When he heard that you're gone, he went out to look for you, but he hasn't been home ever since then. He went missing, and Mommy went looking for him... And now, Mommy is missing as well..."

Vivian finally lost it and broke down in tears, wailing away at the top of her voice.

Ian's hands dropped from his sister's shoulders in shock when he heard everything.

Meanwhile, Sebastian looked at his son's reaction and the crying girl and was left confused.

"Who went missing?" he asked again.

"Matt... The bad guys got him..." Vivian answered again.

"Who is Matt?" Sebastian inquired hastily.

"My brother... Could you help me find him?" Vivian wiped away her tears and blinked her

imploring eyes at Sebastian, hoping to get help. Although she knew the man standing before

her was her father, she thought it would be better not to call him so without Mommy's

permission.

Vivian's request elicited an unexpected response from Sebastian. A mocking smile broke

across his strikingly handsome face, making Vivian withdraw in fear.

"So, are you telling me that your mother has another child other than you?"

Vivian looked at him in silence.

Yeah... Mommy has two more kids... Ian and Matt. We're all Mommy's babies.

Looking at Sebastian's expression, Ian decided to step in and begged him to help. "Daddy,

please save Matteo before it's too late."

"Why should I save him? He's not related to me," Sebastian asked in return.

His tone was scornful and indignant.

Seriously, this woman never fails to surprise me. Not only has she an illegitimate daughter, but she also has another son. Hah! The last thing I would want to do is to associate myself with that disgusting woman!

Just as Sebastian was about to reject his son's entreat, his phone rang.

"Sebastian Hayes, do you really want your kid to die? Fine! I'll give you what you want!"

Over the phone, there was a series of ruffling noises before a deafening gunshot pierced

through the noises. Almost concurrently, a desperate scream joined in the commotion. "No!"

A woman's raucous shout came right after the gunshot.

Sebastian's mind went blank instantly.

Even he could feel the anguish of the woman from her scream.

Right then, Ian's choking pleas shook Sebastian back to reality. The kid had heard the

gunshot from the phone and broke down as he clung to Sebastian's leg.

"Daddy, I hate you!

Why didn't you save Mommy? Why didn't you save Matteo?"

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Instead of waiting for Sebastian to come around, Ian pulled Vivian's hand and ran off. They

did not know where they had to go to seek help, but all they knew was they had to do

something to find their Mommy and save Matteo. After a while,

Sebastian finally came back

to his senses and ran over to the two children. "Hey! Where do you think you're going?" "Let

us go! We want to go save Mommy!" Ian bellowed in uncontrollable rage. He glared at

Sebastian with his eyes full of hatred as he pushed his hand away forcefully. It did not take

long before Ian realized his blunder. He had shouted “Mommy” twice when he was lashing out at Sebastian. To Ian’s surprise, instead of interrogating him, Sebastian seemed unusually calm. He looked at the two kids for a few seconds and dragged them into the car. “Stay inside!” Speaking, he slammed the door

behind them and went to the driver’s seat before the car zoomed off. Within a few minutes, the black Maybach was already out of Old Town when Luke called. “Mr. Hayes, I’ve got their whereabouts. They are in an abandoned vessel by the pier. We’ve already sent some helicopters and snipers over.” “Got it.” Sebastian hung up after receiving news from Luke. He straightened his back and stepped hard on the pedal as the car sped down the street. Although he was caught in a tense situation, his face did not betray any emotions. Sebastian drove on steadily, just as he would any other day when he was going to work. Despite his cool, it was obvious that he took this incident seriously. After all, he had sent out helicopters and a few snipers. This itself was enough to illustrate how severe the situation was. A glimmer of zest broke out on the abductor’s face when his phone rang – he had been waiting anxiously for Sebastian’s call for the past fifteen minutes. “Mr. Hayes, have you made up your mind?” “Where’s the kid?” Sebastian ignored his question and interrogated the man about the child instead. “How do you know he’s not dead?” The man asked after a slight pause. An apathetic chuckle came from Sebastian’s side. “I figured you won’t kill the child, ’cause it’s money you want. Besides, it’s not like you have the guts to kill my son. You can’t afford to.”

Sebastian's threats rendered the man speechless. What Sebastian said was true, so the kidnapper had nothing to say in retaliation. "Well, yes, the child is still alive. I hope you've got the money ready." "I have the one billion you want, but you'll have to prove to me that the child is still alive," Sebastian negotiated calmly but firmly. One billion was not a small amount, so Sebastian thought he had better err on the cautious side and make sure Matteo was alive. After all, Sebastian Hayes would never make a losing bargain. The man half-expected Sebastian's request. Thus, he fiddled with his phone for a bit and switched the voice call to a video call. When the video got less grainy and Sebastian could finally take a good look at the hostage, he finally understood why it was not a prank call. The kidnapper really had a child with him. But he was not the only person in the video. There was another woman. Although her face was splattered with blood, she had her shaking arms around the boy. "What are you doing? Don't touch him!" the injured woman yelled. When the woman realized the man had them caught on a video, her arms tightened around the child she was protecting, trying to shield him from harm. Sasha Wand! Without Sebastian himself realizing, a hint of anger sparkled in his eyes as he narrowed his eyes at the familiar figure. "Get lost, woman! Or I'll kill both of you!" The man shouted and lifted his leg to kick Sasha's back mercilessly. "Mommy!" Matteo bawled the moment Sasha fell to the ground. The impact sent a fresh flow of blood gushing out of her shoulder as she hit against the cold, wet floor. On the other hand, Sebastian's face was taut with concentration. His nails dug deep into the leather steering wheel as his grip

intensified. "Mommy!" Matteo cried out frantically as he knelt in front of Sasha, demented with worry and fear. "Come over here, you brat! Come over if you don't want your mother to die!"

The man gave Matteo a brutal tug and dragged the five-year-old over effortlessly, like an eagle preying on a small animal. "Let him go!" Sasha scrambled desperately towards the brute, stumbling her way to Matteo. Her body was soaked in blood, and yet, she was relentless. The man booted her aside and brought Matteo closer so Sebastian could see him. Sebastian almost hit the brake pedal in an emergency when he saw the boy. What he saw hit him like a lightning bolt. He jerked his head closer to the screen and scrutinized the boy before his eyes. Who is he? Ian? Wait, no! Ian's in the car. Who on earth is this boy? Why does he look so much like Ian? His eyelids twitched as he looked at Matteo. An inexplicable glint flashed in his eyes as Sebastian fixed his gaze on the child.

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"Matt! Ian, look! It's Matt!" Vivian cried and pulled Ian over. The two gasped in terror when they saw the atrocious scene. "So, Mr. Hayes, is this your son? You'd better pay up, or I'll kill him right here!" the man jeered with a sadistic laugh. When the man saw Sebastian's reaction, he knew instantly that Sebastian was shocked. Sebastian's mind went blank. He totally did not expect to see a boy who looked just like Ian. Before he could recover from the shock, Sasha had already picked up a huge wench behind the man. Though she was struggling to get on her feet, she was ready to give that man a fatal blow. Sebastian's eyes

widened in alarm. Without a second thought, he hit the command button beside his hand.

The snipers near the pier were already waiting for his order to shoot. Before Sasha could ambush the kidnapper, the man's body froze at a muffled shot. Sasha took a step back instinctively as specks of warm blood splashed on her face. Right at that instant, she was lost for words. She stood looking at the man dropping to the ground with a blank stare.

Everything happened so quickly that her body stiffened at the brutal sight. It was not until a pair of small, clammy hands tugged her that she finally came around and drooped her head, looking at the frightened child. "Mommy, Daddy's here. He came to save us." Sasha felt an unbearable burden lifted from her chest immediately. Then, she collapsed to the ground and passed out. She had been out looking for Matteo for the entire night, and she was spent.

The wound on her body, although not fatal, had sapped her of her remaining energy with all the excessive bleeding over the past hours. Help arrived in a timely fashion.

The bodyguards took Matteo with them after Sasha was rushed to the hospital immediately.

That was the first time Sebastian met his son – a son he had never seen over the past five years. Sasha had kept him well-hidden over the years. "I'm so sorry, Matt!" When Ian saw him, he ran over and apologized profusely. Matteo gave him a warm hug, a tired smile spread across his small face. "You have nothing to be sorry for, Ian. You're my family, and I don't want anything to happen to you either. Come to think of it, it's good that I was the one who got kidnapped. I doubt you'll be able to survive all this." Tears welled up in Ian's eyes when he heard what Matteo said. After all Matteo had been through, he was still thinking

about Ian. Sebastian looked at Matteo, and an approving smile subtly settled on his lips.

Indeed, he was glad to have finally met his other son, but Matteo's commendable character was what made Sebastian pleasantly surprised. For the past five years, Sebastian had given the best education to Ian. Yet, Matteo also grew up well despite not being as privileged. His

character and mannerism were exceptionally refined and applaudable. This sure put

Sebastian in a good mood. Seeing the happiness on his father's face, Ian held his siblings'

hands and suggested that they go greet Sebastian. But the smile on Matteo's face suddenly vanished as he pulled back his hand.

"I'll go wait for Mommy. Let's go, Vivi." "Sure," Vivian agreed. The two turned and left without

even looking at Sebastian. In the meantime, Ian and Sebastian looked at one another, not

knowing what to say. Did my son just turn his back on me? He doesn't even care if I'm his

father? A gloom settled over Sebastian's chiseled face. Ian came over and wanted to explain

Matteo and Vivian's behavior, but Sebastian just patted him gently on his head and assured

him before going after the two kids. Sebastian knew he was the one who had to do the

explaining. After all, he had never done anything for Matteo. "Matt. That's your name right?

Matt." Sebastian asked when he caught up with the kids who were in front of the operating theater.

He then bent down towards the boy and inquired gently. Nonetheless, Matteo was not

buying it at all. He turned his head and looked to another side. Although his reaction was

quick, Sebastian still caught a glimpse of tears in the boy's eyes. Right then, guilt

immediately crept in Sebastian's heart. "I'm sorry, Matt. I never knew about you. That's why I dismissed the kidnapper's call when he said he had my son. I would have done everything I could to save you if I knew. I really didn't mean to come so late." As a father himself, Sebastian knew why the child was angry and did not want to greet him though the kid knew he was his father. True enough, that was why Matteo was disappointed. When Matteo got carried off, the kidnapper clearly told him that he had called Sebastian three times. And yet Sebastian simply ignored those calls. On the contrary, Sasha was the one who came to his rescue. Using her tablet, she located Matteo and came to protect him.

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Matteo's eyes watered as he thought about his mother. He knew he was the reason why she was so badly wounded. The boy blinked his eyes hard to force back his tears. Before long, he finally came to terms with his emotions and turned towards Sebastian. "Do you blame Mommy?" Sebastian looked at him, puzzled. "Mommy lied to you. Do you blame her for that?" He looked at Sebastian in the eyes. From his unwavering gaze, Sebastian could tell there was worry and fear. Do I blame her? The question resounded in Sebastian's mind as he thought about everything that had happened. He would be lying if he said he did not blame

her at all. She hid Matteo from him for five years and even told him that Ian was the only one who survived.

But what about now? Do I still blame her? Thoughts battled in Sebastian's mind. First, she faked her death. Now he even found out that she kept his son from him – one who was still

alive. If Sasha were not in the operation room right now, Sebastian could have well thrown her into the deep seas. But do I still blame her? The bloody scene of how Sasha protected Matteo flashed before his mind. Sebastian pursed his lips and shook his head determinedly.

"No, I don't blame her. She's the one who raised you." "Really?" A smile broke out on Matteo's face when Sebastian finally elicited an answer. "Yes, it's true. I don't blame her," Sebastian assured him. "Then will you take care of Mommy?" "Sure!" Sebastian replied without the slightest hesitation. What Sebastian said was heart-felt. Sasha was severely injured after the incident. Thus, Sebastian would definitely provide the care she needed since she was his kids' mother. After that, Matteo finally forgave his father, and the two made up.

Sebastian decided to bring all the three kids back to Frontier Bay throughout Sasha's stay at the hospital, although he was still not comfortable around Vivian. "Let's go. You can't stay here since your mother's still in the ward," Sebastian called out coldly to Vivian.

Things were still a little awkward between the two. Incipient tears rolled furiously in the girl's eyes. Why is Daddy so cold to me? He was so nice to Matt just now. I'm also his child, but he didn't recognize me... Seeing his sister so upset, Matteo came over and comforted her. "Vivi, we have to head home first. Mommy will definitely be disappointed when she finds out that Daddy already knew about my existence. She will be even more upset if she finds out Daddy knows about you too." "Yeah, we should just wait till Mommy wakes up," Ian came over and urged. Vivian nodded firmly and went with them in the end. She was the last child Mommy could claim as her own, so Vivian was determined to keep it that way. At that moment, she

had made up her mind to not let Mommy feel hurt. The three kids followed Sebastian home to Frontier Bay. A huge reason why Sebastian did not recognize Vivian was because she was the smallest among the triplets when they were born. Sasha gave birth to the triplets prematurely eight months into pregnancy. If it were not for Dr. Kaye, who performed a C-section on her, the children would not have survived. But because Vivian was the smallest in size when they were born, she still looked like she was a year or two younger than her brothers. That was why it never occurred to Sebastian that she was one of the triplets. Besides, daughters usually took over their mothers' appearance, so Sebastian was totally unsuspecting of Vivian's identity. He brought the three kids home, thinking only Matteo and Ian were his children.

Over at the Greens, Xandra was fuming when she found out about what happened. "That sl*t! I can't believe she actually kept another child to herself. The other twin did not even die in the first place!" Her whole face twisted in fury and hatred. Beside her, Kelly was equally mad as she was the one who arranged the whole kidnapping. The original plan was to kidnap Ian and make Sebastian realize that his son had been visiting Sasha at her place. Kelly wanted to incite Sebastian against Sasha so he would get rid of her. But just as she was feeling proud of her fool-proof plan, the long-lost twin came out of nowhere and spoiled her plan. "I can't believe she has been hiding one of the twins all this while! That cunning b*tch!" Xandra screeched.

Kelly was busy making other arrangements to make sure everything did not trace back to her when she caught Xandra wallowing at the corner. "What do you think you're doing? All you know is to complain. Will that solve the problem?" Xandra finally quietened down after her aunt scolded her, but the abhorrence in her eyes was still obvious. "With things turning out this way, Sebastian will definitely not go easy on the main culprit behind this. We have to lay low for now," Kelly warned her niece. "So I'm supposed to just sit here and watch her go into Hayes Residence like it's her own house? Do you know that her two kids are at Frontier Bay already?" Xandra howled. She knew she could not just wait and do nothing. Regardless, Sasha was not an incompetent rival, and Xandra knew it full well from her past dealings with her.

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Xandra had been under tremendous stress recently as things kept happening one after another without giving her a break. When she found out their plan failed, they shouted in vexation like a madman. Kelly glared at her useless niece from the corner of her eyes and smacked her lips. "Let's go on a vacation. We should go abroad to get your mind off this." "What? Now?" Xandra questioned in surprise. Nevertheless, Kelly ignored her disapproving gaze and proceeded to book the flight tickets. "You need some time off. As for me, it's better for me to make myself scarce, so Sebastian doesn't find out anything. It will be the end of the story if Sebastian traces things back to us." Xandra clenched her jaw, wanting to disagree, but she knew what her aunt said was true. Hence, she finally gave in. "You can take this chance to study abroad as well."

A woman of substance is always better than a woman with just a pretty face. I remember Sebastian loved all the letters you wrote him last time. You should study a little and improve yourself. Perhaps he might fall in love with you all over again," Kelly said while booking two

tickets on the airline website. Xandra listened to her quietly and nodded. Two days passed, and Sasha finally woke up. Her injury was not fatal, but her body was weak, to begin with. Besides, she lost too much blood from her injury. That was why it took her a good two days to finally come around. Sasha was dazed and confused when she first woke up. For a long time, she stared into the white ceiling, trying to recall what happened to her. "Sasha? Are you awake? You okay?" A surprised voice came from beside her. Sasha turned her head around slowly and looked at the man. "Uncle Jackson?" Jackson heaved a sigh of relief hearing his niece spoke. "Thank God you still know who I am. Let me get you some water." He rolled his wheelchair towards the counter and poured her a drink. Sasha struggled to get up when she saw Jackson getting her a glass of water, only to cringe in pain when she strained her wound. "Don't move. You should rest a little more so you could fully recover," her uncle said as he walked over. Sasha positioned herself back to the original posture and propped back down slowly. Then, she took a sip of water and gave the glass back to Jackson. "Where's Matt? Is he okay?" Sasha asked, her voice hoarse and dry. "He's fine. He's at Frontier Bay with Sebastian now, so you don't have to worry," he assured her. His words ended up agitating Sasha. She cocked her head towards

Jackson with her eyes wide, clearly shocked at the piece of news. "What? He's with Sebastian? Does he know Matt is his son then?" Sasha showered him with a litany of questions. "Of course, he does. The two kids look exactly the same. How would he not know?" Jackson replied. Sasha's face turned pale the moment he said that. Shoot. What's he gonna do now? Is he gonna take Matt back as his son? I bet that's what he was trying to do, or he wouldn't even bring Matteo back to Hayes Residence! Tears welled up in her eyes at the thought of losing Matteo to Sebastian. Meanwhile, Jackson spotted her agony and comforted her. "Just focus on recovering, Sasha. We can think about this after you feel better. You're the one who brought the kid up, so if he insists on fighting over child custody, we will see him at court." Sasha knew her uncle was only trying to make her feel better. After all, who would stand a chance again the Hayes at the court? It was impossible to win against them. Tears streamed down her cheeks as reality sunk in. After that, Jackson decided to give her some space and left after staying on for a little while. It was not like he could hang around longer even if he wanted to. His body was weak, and he had to go home to rest. Not long after Jackson left, Sasha dozed off again. By the time she woke up, it was already dusk. Before Sasha could look at the clock to check what time it was, a child's whisper came from the outside and caught her ears. "Matt, is Mommy awake?" "Yes. Daddy got a call just now, and they said she was awake. Don't worry, Vivi.

We just have to wait. Another familiar and loving voice followed after the girl's question.

Matteo? Vivi? Sasha opened her eyes wide and sat up. When Vivian noticed Sasha's movement, she opened the door and dashed in with excitement. "Mommy! Are you awake, Mommy? I miss you, Mommy!" Vivi was as happy as a lark to see her mother awake. With a huge smile on her face, Sasha welcomed her daughter into her embrace as she caressed the latter's head. "Mommy misses you too, Vivi!" Behind her, the two boys came in happily. Matteo ran over when he saw Sasha and joined the happy pair. Ian, on the other hand, was less emotionally expressive. He was someone who took time to warm up to someone else, but he was undoubtedly elated to see Sasha again.

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"Mommy!" Matteo's voice echoed loudly in the ward. "Matt! My sweet little boy!" Sasha hugged him tight as she called his name, her voice almost breaking in tears. She could not believe she was holding Matteo in her arms again just when she thought she had lost him.

In the meantime, Ian stood in the distance as he watched the exhilarated lot. He also wanted to run into his mother's embrace, but he did not dare to. It was his fault that his brother almost ended up dying, and it was his fault his mother was severely injured. The guilty child stood still at his place, worried that his mother would not like him anymore and that she would never forgive him.

But amidst the excitement of meeting her two children again, Sasha turned around and blinked her watery eyes, looking for her eldest son. "Ian? Ian, why are you standing there? Come here..." Sasha already knew that Ian had found out that she was his mother since Jackson had told her about it in the morning. Ian's face lighted up in joy when Sasha called

out to him. He sped over and plunged himself into her mother's arms. Just as the mother and children were enjoying their reunion, a towering figure appeared at the door. Sebastian's silhouette was clearly defined under the rays of the setting sun. He had his hands casually tucked in the pockets of his slacks and had his suit unbuttoned, revealing a moss green handmade shirt underneath. He took a step forward into the room, stepping out of the sun before leaning against the wall. His sculpted face did not show a single hint of emotion as he stood there quietly, making the ambiance tense all of a sudden. Sasha's heart skipped a beat as she watched Sebastian come in. "You're here..." she greeted him weakly. She knew she was partly to blame for the whole incident. If she had told him from the very beginning that his other son was still alive and was with her, all this might not have happened. More importantly, she had hidden that kid right under his nose. Her shifty

gaze darted at Sebastian now and again, but he did not even look at her in the face. Instead, he went over to the table and took up her medical record. The air in the room was getting unbearably stiff when Vivian finally spoke. "Mommy, I miss you so much. Look at my face. I've lost so much weight because I missed you too much." She crawled into her mother's bed and snuggled in her mother's blanket. The girl poked her head out of the blanket and put her face up close to Sasha so she could have a good look at her. Sasha giggled and stroke her cheeks tenderly. "Hm, I think my little sweetie did lose some weight." "Promise me you'll make me fried chicken when you feel better, Mommy? You always make the best fried chicken," Vivian requested. Her soft and affectionate voice could

simply melt anybody's heart. Sasha pinched her chubby cheeks and smiled at her daughter lovingly. Just as Sasha was about to promise her daughter, she felt a piercing gaze burning in her direction. She looked up uneasily and met Sebastian's glare. He was watching Vivien intently with his brows locked when he caught Sasha looking at him. All of a sudden, he became conscious of his actions and cleared his throat awkwardly. Sebastian could not deny that he did not like that little girl, but every time he saw her being sweet to anyone but him, an unaccountable feeling of anger rose in his heart. Come on, do I really look that fierce? I took care of her for two days! But she's never this nice to me! Sasha looked at the unwelcoming man and mustered her courage to strike a conversation. "Thank you for taking care of the kids for the past two days." Regardless of how he had felt towards her earlier, she was grateful to him for saving her and Matteo. Thus, Sasha could only tread carefully to see if he was still resentful. "You don't have to thank me for taking care of my own kids," Sebastian replied apathetically, "But since you're awake already, you can take the girl with you." Sasha's brows arched in surprise. "Take her with me? Where to?" "How would I know? Bring her to her dad, of course. Are you asking me where your husband is?" Sebastian questioned her back spitefully. He had resentment written all over his face, and his tone was bitter. That man could not believe he had to talk with her about this topic that disgusted him so. Meanwhile, Sasha was completely at a loss for words. So he doesn't know that this is his own daughter? Don't tell me he could only recognize Matteo but not Vivian. Sasha was beyond speechless, but

deep in her heart, she felt a flicker of relief. At least I get to keep Vivian to myself. This is better than losing both Matteo and Vivian at the same time. "What's wrong? Feeling ashamed of your past? Oh, don't you worry because I'm not interested in your love life at all. We ended five years ago, so I won't do anything to your man." "He's dead." After a long pause, Sasha muttered under her breath, her grip tightening around her little girl. It was now Sebastian's

turn to fall into silence. Dead again? Is she like a black widow or something? Why is everyone dead?

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He bit her lip. Sensing the predicament he had placed himself in, he stood there fuming.

However, looking at the little girl, he felt his anger dissipate without even realizing it. They

remained in the ward a little longer, as Sebastian had to be at work.

Before sending the

children back, he summoned the doctor to enquire about Sasha's

condition. "Mr. Hayes, the

patient is recovering well. If nothing else happens, she will be allowed to be discharged in

two days," said the doctor. "Yay! Did you hear that, Mommy? You'll be out soon," Vivian

squealed happily. "Will you come live with us at Frontier Bay? We have a large house there,

and it's very beautiful!" Sasha glanced at Sebastian skulking in the corner of the ward and

shook her head.

"Of course not, Vivi. We don't live at Frontier Bay. He will take you there these two days

because Mommy will be here at the hospital. When I get out, we'll be going home, okay?"

"Okay, mommy," Vivi's face fell in disappointment. Matteo overheard and chimed in. "Yes,

Mommy, I will pack our things these two days, and we will go back home together when you get out.” He was a good boy, always obedient to her. Before she could respond, Sebastian, who had just finished speaking with the doctor, stomped over with a scowl on his face.

“Matteo! Where do you think you’re going? Royal Court One is now your home, and that’s where you’ll be!” he snapped, with a nasty expression that was plain that he would not take no for an answer.

Sasha and her three children felt cornered and alarmed. However, watching Matteo scrunching up his face in an effort to hold back his tears, her maternal instincts kicked in.

“What did you do that for? You frightened him!” she glared at him angrily. Guilt flitted across Sebastian’s face, but he quickly reasserted his uncompromising stance.

“I am stating a fact,” he said. “He is my son, and he will not be going back there.” “And why shouldn’t he?”

Sasha retorted. “He is my son just as much as yours. Possibly even more so, seeing as I

was the one who had raised him for five years.” She was incensed but still afraid of his

temper. The thing that she had feared the most had arrived. Sebastian was trying to fight for

custody of her babies. Taking them away from her home would just be the first of many

more to come. Will he ban them from ever seeing her again? Sasha hugged Matteo close at

the thought. Meanwhile, Sebastian was beginning to get worked up again. “

This is ridiculous! He is a Hayes. He will be living with me and not that dump you call a home. Heck, my maids live better than you, so I will not permit my child to live in that hell

hole!" "You- " Sasha gasped for breath and clutched her chest, her anger too much for her still frail body. Matteo hugged his mother in a panic. "Mommy, are you okay? Please don't be angry. I won't go anywhere! I will live with you!" Sebastian stood motionless. Just then, Ian came over and tugged on his father's hand. "Daddy, if you bully Mommy again, I will go with them too!" he walked over and joined his brother at Sasha's side. Sebastian was furious. He had to fight the urge to spank the boys. They don't even respect me as a father! I paid for their meals and pushed work aside to spend time with them, and this is how they repay me? Little rascals! He ushered the three children out of the ward without another word. After that, they did not come back for two days. Despite the fight, Sasha felt optimistic that she would be out and about in two days. When that day arrived, she was in a cheerful mood. An attendant arrived as she was changing out of her hospital robes. "Ms. Wand, Mr. Hayes has instructed that you be sent to Royal Court One at once."

"What?" She leaped up. To Royal Court One? Why? What does that scoundrel want? Is he crazy? Me, living in his house? Sasha felt sure she had misheard. However, the guard who handled her discharge and escorted her out of the building proved otherwise. He held her firmly by her good arm and steered her towards the car. Within minutes, they took off for Frontier Bay. At this very moment, three young children were having a very important meeting at the villa's hanging garden on the second floor. "My part is done. Mommy will be able to move in immediately once she arrives. How about you, Ian?" Matteo said. "Done! I've sent someone to pick up Mommy!" Ian said confidently. "I've cleaned up Mommy's bedroom too! It's next to mine," Vivian chirped, not wanting to be left out.

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Excellent! As soon as each child reported their respective task, Matteo looked around,

satisfied. "Good! The next order of business is to greet Mommy.

Remember, guys, we must

make her feel like Daddy wants her here, got it?" "Yes, Matteo," Vivian

said, and Ian nodded

briskly. An unforeseen complication occurred to Ian. He turned to

Matteo and frowned.

"What about Daddy? What happens when he finds out?" Matteo waved his hand impatiently.

"Don't worry about that. I've taken care of it. He won't find out." His siblings sighed in relief.

Half an hour later, the black Cayenne finally emerged. The children excitedly ran out.

"Mommy! Mommy, come here!" The first to reach was Vivian as she loved her mother the most.

As Sasha exited the vehicle, she pulled her child in for a big hug. As she watched Vivian

clinging to her leg, she didn't realize how much she missed them. "Well, Mommy is here. Are

you happy, sweetie?" "Yes, very much, Mommy," Vivian answered. "I've cleaned your

bedroom for you, so you'll be living right next to me. It's beautiful." She informed her

solemnly whilst watching her expression intently as if she was expecting a word of praise

from Sasha. Sasha was stunned upon hearing that. Even a bedroom was prepared? Did

Sebastian really agree to let me live here? Or was it because I was still recovering and that he

felt sorry for me? As she pondered her situation, the terror she regarded him with seemed to

vanish slightly. She was even feeling optimistic without realizing it.

Matteo greeted his

mother next, beaming from ear to ear. Instead of tackling her like his sister did, he lent a

hand with her bags. "Ian," Matteo called. "Come here and give me a hand with these."

The usually reserved Ian even sprinted over and helped. Sasha watched them, and her heart

was instantly filled with gratitude and joy. That wasn't even the best part.

As soon as she

stepped over the threshold, Wendy, the housemaid greeted her warmly.

"Ms. Wand, you're

here! Are you feeling any better? You poor thing. I have some broth in the kitchen for you.

Once you've settled in, I'll bring you some." Sasha felt close to tears. It had been a long time

since she was being cared for that way. As a single mother for five years, she was always

the one giving out love and care and receiving little in return. But now, someone was even

cooking for her. Sasha scrunched her nose, trying not to cry. "Sounds good, Wendy. Thank

you." She hurried upstairs with her luggage before she broke down. Up on the second floor,

Ian used to be the sole occupant. But now, along the corridor, Matteo, Vivian, and Sasha

joined him. It was a good thing that Sebastian's villa was huge. "Mommy, do you like this

room?" Matteo asked as they entered it. "Um..." Sasha avoided his gaze and busied herself

with putting away her clothes and medicine.

Matteo smiled to himself. He ran through the bathroom into Ian's bedroom and huddled up

with his siblings to conduct another meeting. "Did you see that?

Mommy thinks that this

was Daddy's idea. You guys did a great job. Ian, that move with Wendy was genius." Matteo

gave his brother a thumbs up. Ian wasn't used to being directly addressed and praised like

this. He looked down shyly but was secretly overjoyed.

At the same time, Vivian's eyes shone with excitement. "What's the next step, Matteo?

Daddy will be home any minute." However, Matteo still did not know what to do. Sasha was

oblivious about the fact that she was being discussed in hushed whispers in the neighboring room. She worked slowly as her arm was still throbbing with pain. As Sasha was taking a long time, Wendy came up to her room and knocked. "Ms. Wand, do you still have a lot to go? Here, let me help. The broth is getting cold, so go and have some while it's still warm." "Oh! That's alright, Wendy. I'm almost done here," Sasha was not used to being

pampered. It made her feel slightly uneasy. Thus, she quickly finished up and followed Wendy downstairs. Wendy's kind demeanor was in direct contrast to Mrs. Lowe, the old maid. The latter was ill-mannered and insubordinate. The moment Sasha laid her eyes on Mrs. Lowe, she had a bad feeling about her.

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Wendy is a nice change. Much more pleasant. After that, Wendy led Sasha into the dining room. "Now, Ms. Wand, you take your time with the broth. I have to get busy. Mr. Ian has requested calzones for dinner." She rolled up her sleeves briskly. "Calzones, huh?" Sasha repeated. She felt guilty. Even though Ian was her flesh and blood, she knew nothing about him and what he liked. At that moment, she made it a point to learn everything about him, and offhand remarks such as these were stored away carefully in Sasha's mind. "Yes," Wendy nodded. "It's one of the things I don't know how to make, so I'd better figure it out now. I sure hope he'll like it." "Oh, it's a good thing that I do! Can I come in with you?" Sasha exclaimed, looking enquiringly at Wendy. This was her chance to cook something for her son, which she had never done. Calzones

were one of her specialties. Matteo and Vivian loved them. In fact, she had made a big batch not too long ago. Hearing that, Wendy was delighted. "How fortunate! I appreciate it very much, but your arm..." she hesitated. "That's not a problem," Sasha said quickly. "You can prepare the dough, and I'll do the wrapping." She brushed off the inconvenience of her arm for fear of being excluded from this endeavor. Wendy examined her for a moment before agreeing to let her help. After a hectic afternoon of unpacking and wrapping calzones, it was dusk before Sasha finally had a chance to rest. "Phew, finally done!" Wendy wiped her brow. "How's your arm, Ms. Wand?" "Oh it's fine," Sasha replied, waving her good arm. She then excused herself to wash her hands. Meanwhile, Wendy was in a fantastic mood. Touting the tray of unbaked calzones, she said, "I'd better give Mr. Hayes a call to come home early tonight. It's not often we get to have such a delightful dinner together." The moment Sasha heard that, she froze while still bent over the kitchen sink. Sebastian? She's asking him to come back earlier? Out of nowhere, Sasha felt a pang of anxiety. She then tried to think of something to say. "Ms. Wand? What do you think?" Wendy probed. "Oh? That's... that's a good idea. But are you sure this is something he would like?" Sasha answered distractedly, trying to dissuade Wendy. Wendy, however, was determined to carry through with her plan. After she assured Sasha that Sebastian was not a picky eater, the former went away to call

him. Sebastian is not a picky eater? Doubt arose in Sasha's mind as she recalled clearly that this was not the case.

He was extremely picky to the point of being incredibly annoying! Nonetheless, Sasha had no choice but to go along with the plan. Extracting the piping hot tray out of the oven, she followed Wendy upstairs. "Ian," she called, "The calzones are done!" She opened the door to Ian's room and exclaimed. "Matteo! Vivian! What are you two doing here?" The children, who were deep in thought with plotting, stood up hurriedly at the sudden unannounced entrance of their mother. Wasn't she making calzones? Why is she up here? Vivian was the most nervous, as she wasn't used to lying to her mother. On the contrary, Matteo was the first to respond. "Mommy! We were just playing, and Ian is unbelievable!" "Is that so?" Sasha smiled.

"Matteo, you are unbelievable too. All my babies are unbelievable." Luckily for them, she had no idea what they were up to. Matteo smiled widely at his mother's compliment. Since the children were all there, Sasha placed the tray on the table so they could all enjoy. "I'm hungry, Mommy," Vivian whined. "Me too, Mommy," Matteo added. "Is that pork in there?" Vivian and Matteo were big fans of her calzones. She would always try her best to make the best calzones she could for them. As they were greedily munching, she turned to look towards Ian, who was standing slightly away from them. "Little Ian, why are you standing there? Didn't you ask for calzones today? Come and have some. I made them myself," Sasha beckoned. However, Ian hesitated. He had never had calzones before. His father never allowed him to as they were too oily to be healthy. Besides, he was used to much more exotic meals than this at Frontier Bay. Slowly, Ian shuffled forward. Watching his siblings devour one bite after another, he finally relented.

Sasha smiled and fed him a bite. "Is it good?" she asked. "Mm-hmm," he nodded as his eyes shone with delight. Huh? This child... Didn't he ask for calzones?