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They're here for Ian?

Sasha hurried out of the room immediately and demanded, "Who are you? Did Sebastian send you?"

"No, you misunderstood, Ms. Wand. We're here on behalf of Mr. Frederick Hayes. He wants to have a family gathering tonight since Ms. Sabrina is coming home, so he sent us over to pick the kids up."

The men were pretty courteous and introduced themselves in a polite manner before

coming clean about their intentions.

Sasha was left with no other choice.

How am I supposed to reject when Frederick's the one making the request?

Hence, she begrudgingly returned to the room and packed her sons' stuff. After that, she walked them out the door.

"Matt, remember to listen to your grandpa and daddy, okay? You can also ask Ian for help if you face any problems."

Sasha was worried that her younger son would not be able to adapt well at the family gathering, so she nagged a little before they left.

Sensing her worries, Matteo promised confidently, "I got it. You don't have to worry, Mommy.

I will take care of myself."

Even the usually quiet Ian took the initiative to hold his younger brother's hand and declared,

"I will keep him safe!"

Hearing that finally got Sasha to calm down. She then watched as the kids were taken away.

Vivian had been watching from the side, and after both her siblings were gone, leaving only her mother and her at home, she couldn't help tearing up a little.

“Mommy...”

“There, there, my precious. This is all my fault. I’ll cook your favorite drumsticks to make up for this, okay?”

Sasha immediately went to pick up and soothe the girl while walking into the kitchen.

She couldn’t help but feel guilty toward her daughter who was left out.

...

At the Isles Hotel on Norham Isles.

Sebastian only received the update about the change in location of the gathering when it

was almost time for him to clock off. It’s so cold out there. Yet, Sabrina wants to have dinner

on Norham Isles, which was only accessible through boats.

“Has she f*cking lost her mind?” cursed Sebastian the second he learned of that news.

Not daring to say another word, Luke kept his mouth sealed and waited until his boss got

into the car before driving toward Norham Isles.

What was Sabrina Hayes like?

The truth was that anyone who worked in Hayes Corporation would know that Sabrina was

a person whose name could get anybody’s scalp to tingle.

Before Sebastian took over Hayes Corporation, Sabrina was the one who helped Frederick

manage the enormous company whenever he fell ill.

That was when everyone at the office experienced firsthand the wicked side of that

domineering woman, and to make matters worse, she was a control freak!

In other words, anyone who got on her bad side could either obey her every command or

end up in a miserable way.

Unfortunately, Sasha was one of the people Sabrina didn’t like back then.

Sebastian was on his way to Norham Isles when he received a text from Sasha.

“Both Matt and Ian went to the party. Frederick sent someone to pick them up. Please look out for them, especially Matt. He had never been to a place like that and... met his aunt before, so pay extra attention to him.”

Sasha only texted him for the kids’ sake.

Dad sent someone to pick the kids up? I don’t remember inviting him to the party, so why is he going?

Confusion flashed past Sebastian’s eyes, but he assumed that Sabrina was the one who sent the invitation, so he didn’t dwell on the matter. Putting his phone aside, he picked up the documents he brought with him.

Forty minutes later on Norham Isles.

What could have happened in forty minutes?

Sebastian hadn’t had the chance to finish working on the documents he brought with him, and he wondered how many of them he had signed.

Unfortunately, inside the luxurious hotel on Norham Isles, one of the two kids was already being interrogated like he was a murder suspect.

That kid was Matteo!

“I will ask you one last time. What is your mother’s ulterior motive? Why did she come back? Tell me!”

That voice was stern and merciless, unlike the tone an aunt should use to talk to her nephew. Moreover, her dark-colored make-up exuded a menacing vibe, which made her seem downright terrifying.

Matteo’s tiny face turned even more pale.

He was normally a cheerful and lively kid, but that night, he became so frightened that he couldn’t even speak.

Is this really my aunt? Why is she so scary?

Matteo was so terrified that his eyes reddened with tears.

Meanwhile, Ian was locked out of the room, and he used his petite hand to bang on the door

when he noticed that his brother had been in there for quite some time.

“Open the door!”

demanded Ian.

“Mr. Ian, please stop banging on the door. Your aunt will let your brother out once she’s done

asking some questions. I’m sure it will be soon.”

The security guard responsible for guarding the door walked over to carry the kid away as

he didn’t want the latter to disturb the interrogation process in the room.

However, the smart boy saw through the security guard’s intentions and dodged in time.

“Open the door!” growled Ian.

“Mr. Ian...”

“You have three seconds. Open the door now, or I promise you won’t live to see the next

sunrise!” threatened the furious little guy, resembling a mini version of Sebastian.

His icy aura could make anyone shudder in fear.

The kid was truly similar to his father in terms of both looks and demeanor.

The security guard finally opened the door, and Ian rushed in immediately.

However, it was still too late. All he saw was his brother crying and trembling uncontrollably

in front of the scary woman.

“Sabrina Hayes, leave him alone!”

Ian was so angry that his eyes reddened. After picking up the ashtray on the table, he

immediately tossed it at the vile woman.

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He was not afraid!

In the Hayes family, the only person who could do whatever they like unrestrained, and still

be able to get away with it scot-free, would have to be Ian.

His aunt meant nothing to him.

Once something struck his nerves, he would not care even if he had to tell it to his

grandfather's face!

It had never crossed Sabrina's mind that her nephew would suddenly attack her like that.

She did not see it coming at all when an ashtray came flying towards her and hit her

squarely on the arm with a thud.

"Ian! What have you done? How dare you hit your own aunt!"

"Get out!"

Fuming, Ian yelled at Sabrina. Acting as Matteo's protector, he came to his younger brother's

defense and shielded his tiny body firmly behind him. At the same time, his hands grabbed

onto something else.

As the bodyguard watched, beads of sweat were already dripping down his face.

"Ms. Sabrina, let's leave this place. Your life will be at stake if Mr. Ian throws the bowl at

you," the bodyguard said as he forcefully dragged the mad woman out of the room.

Indeed, the bodyguard was right. Ian had chosen a bowl from the table as his weapon this

time around.

Ian was no pushover. Once triggered, there was really nothing the little boy would not do out

of spite. If the bodyguard had not intervened, that bowl Ian was holding might have already

smashed in Sabrina's face.

Sabrina was eventually lugged out of the room, screaming all the way.

As soon as the crazy woman was gone, silence fell in the private room once more. Ian

instantly turned around to check on his younger brother.

"Are you alright?"

"I'm fine!"

Matteo had recovered a while ago.

He was frightened at first. He had never met such a scary woman.

However, after Ian came to the rescue and then tossed the ashtray at the villain, Matteo was overjoyed. What's there to be afraid of? Ian is here to protect me, isn't he? Ian will beat the crap out of that mad woman!

Matteo gazed at Ian admiringly. "Ian, you're so awesome! Do you often have to beat up that woman at home?"

Ian's face turned stone-cold. "She doesn't dare to mess with me!"

Nice!

In the end, Matteo did not take this matter to heart, because he knew that it had nothing to do with either Ian or Daddy, and everything to do with that sick aunt of theirs.

And so, the two children left the place, hand in hand.

Right at that moment, Sebastian arrived.

"Sebastian, you're finally here! Do you know that your son almost beat me to death back there?"

Sabrina, who had been waiting for her brother in the lobby, immediately stormed towards

Sebastian when she saw him coming. She showed him her bruised arm and began

bombarding him with angry complaints.

Sebastian merely glimpsed at her injury.

Sebastian certainly was not on good terms with his sister. Both of them were aggressive

elites and yielded impressive achievements in their respective fields.

Siblings like them

definitely would not have fostered deep affection for each other.

Furthermore, the two of them saw each other as a thorn in their side ever since an incident

long ago.

It happened when they were quite young. Sebastian's illness had led Sabrina to believe that

her brother was physically and mentally incapable. In the years after that, as she followed

Frederick's footsteps in taking charge of the Hayes Corporation, she had been reluctant to let go of the reins.

She believed Sebastian was no longer qualified for the leadership position.

"Why did he hit you?"

Sure enough, Sebastian's tone was icy cold even after he got a view of the bruise.

Sabrina fired up at her brother's reaction. "So this is your attitude?"

Regardless of what

happened? Is that what you think, that an aunt deserves abuse from her nephew? Is that

what you've been teaching your son over the years?"

As soon as she said that, the man who had just entered the lobby turned to narrow his eyes

at her.

This was a sign of danger.

The bodyguard next to them took note and hurriedly stepped in to ease the situation. "Mr.

Hayes, that... It's like this. After Ms. Sabrina had the children picked up and sent here, since

it was her first time meeting Mr. Matteo, she asked him some questions.

Then Mr. Ian got

angry at her."

"What did she ask?"

"She asked young Mr. Matteo how he's been doing these past few years.

Apart from that..."

"Cut the crap! She bullied Matt!"

Just when the bodyguard was attempting to cover up for Sabrina, a

raging, childlike voice

suddenly echoed from the elevator, mercilessly cutting off the

bodyguard's explanation like

the sharp edge of a sword.

The bodyguard said not another word as he stood trembling on the spot,

not even daring to

lift his head.

Ian and Matteo arrived at the scene.

Sebastian's eyes flitted to the two children stepping out of the elevator. He was amazed to discover that his eldest son, who used to be so painfully shy, was taking the lead this time.

Gloomy solemnness and a chilly air shrouded the boy's face.

This little fellow knows how to protect his brother, huh.

The corners of Sebastian's thin lips curled upwards ever so slightly...

"Daddy, she's lying!"

Ian brought Matteo over to where the adults had gathered. He feared that his daddy would

side with the bodyguard and Sabrina. In front of Sebastian, Ian raised his head and yelled

out that line, still fuming.

Sebastian nodded, not doubting his son one bit. "I know that. Is Matt hurt?"

Matteo stepped out from behind his brother. "No, Daddy. I'm not hurt. But Aunt Sabrina..."

Matteo's eyes, clear and full of innocence, glanced worryingly at Sabrina, who was behind them.

Sebastian acknowledged the irony of the moment. "There you have it, Sabrina. This is the

kind of manners I teach my kids. As an aunt, do you have anything else to say?"

"You—"

Sabrina, the strong-willed woman, had never flushed such a dark shade of red so quickly in her life!

It was like getting a hard slap in the face!

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She brought this onto herself.

When she first came back, Sebastian had opted to let bygones be bygones since they had

not seen each other in years. He even had a reception party arranged in honor of her. But

she had to ruin it all.

Who was to be blamed?

In the end, she only had her strong desire for control to blame.

She thought that, among the members of the Hayes family, she was the one in charge. She wanted to be involved in everything, including Sebastian's personal matters.

Little did she know that no one really took her seriously.

Sebastian took the two children away without even stepping into the private room.

Matteo, who had watched the whole thing from the sidelines, let out a sigh. "Daddy, where are we going to eat next? I'm starving."

He felt around his growling tummy.

Sebastian cast a glance his way. He was about to suggest taking them into the city to eat

whatever they want but Ian, who sat on Sebastian's right side, spoke first, "Let's go to

Mommy's house."

"What did you say?" Sebastian looked at him in surprise.

Go to Mommy's house? What does he mean by that? Everything's going so well, why do they want to go there?

The man was not aware that his eldest son, whom he raised on his own, had spent the

whole day with Sasha. They had purchased a new blanket and other daily necessities, keen on settling down for the long term.

Matteo, on the other hand, responded quickly to Sebastian's confusion. "Yes, let's do that.

Let's go back to our place. Daddy, you should know, Mommy bought a lot of groceries today.

If Ian and I hadn't been taken elsewhere so suddenly, we would get to eat a lot more of

Mommy's cooking. Isn't that right, Ian?"

"Right."

Ian nodded without hesitation.

Sebastian fell into silence.

He did not like what he was seeing.

So, has Sasha managed to bribe these brats into submission already?

Seeing how they're so

supportive of her, why don't I have the honor too? I'm their daddy, after all.

Sebastian was not pleased.

But in the end, after the trio returned to the city, Sebastian took them to Sasha's apartment complex.

...

"Okay, Vivi. Here comes your favorite drumsticks!"

The mother-and-daughter pair in the apartment unit had no idea that the two boys were

coming back home with their daddy. Sasha had just taken out two freshly cooked chicken drumsticks from the oven.

Vivian got excited at the sight of her favorite food.

"Wow, it smells so nice! Thanks, Mommy."

The little girl quickly picked up a fork and gobbled up the scrumptious meat. Next to her was

a bowl of ravioli stuffed with shrimp meatballs that Sasha had made for her. The food was absolutely tempting.

Her two sons were not here with them, so Sasha did not make a lot. The portion was just enough for her daughter and herself.

Pleased with her daughter's feedback about her cooking, Sasha went into the kitchen to get

some for herself, only hers consisted of more ravioli and fewer meatballs.

While the two were in the middle of dinner, the video intercom downstairs buzzed to life.

Who can it be at this hour?

Sasha put down her fork and went to answer the call. When she picked up the receiver, she

was not expecting to see the image of her two boys on the screen! She was astonished

because she had just sent them off just a while ago!

"Little Ian? Matt? Why are you back so soon?"

"Mommy, open the door quick! We haven't eaten because we want to have dinner at home.

Oh, we brought Daddy too.”

Downstairs, Matteo, who was dressed in so many layers that he resembled a little bun, waved his hand at the camera and smiled at his mommy. Then, he yanked the tall figure standing behind him to appear on the screen as well.

Sasha did not like what she was seeing.

Instantly, she panicked at the sight of the figure on the screen.

What’s that kid thinking? Why have they come back so soon? And they’ve even brought their father with them!

Sasha, annoyed, hung up the receiver and quickly returned to the living room. She wanted to tidy up the house as fast as she could, so that the figure on her mind would not feel

repulsed when he entered.

But when she walked into the living room, she realized there was nothing much to clean at all.

Her apartment had always been tidy.

So she resorted to putting away the tableware previously left on the table and placing them

in the kitchen. She was discarding the last few items when her visitors arrived at the doorstep.

“Mommy! Mommy! Open the door, we’re here!”

“Is that you, Matt? Mommy, Matt’s home!”

When Vivian, who was still dining at the table, heard her brothers’ voices, her eyes sparkled

with delight. She swiftly forgot about her drumsticks as she leaped from her chair and ran

as fast as her little feet could carry her to open the door for the boys.

When the door swung open, there they were. Her two brothers were right outside.

Vivian was overjoyed to see them. She was about to launch herself into their arms but

stopped when she spotted a figure behind the boys. She looked up, and her marble-like eyes

widened even more.

Why... Why is Daddy here?

Shocked, the little girl gave up the idea of engaging in cheeky banter with her brothers. She

turned around and scurried back into the house, looking for Mommy.

Outside the door, Sebastian was taken aback by her reaction.

Am I that scary? Vivi ran away when she saw me. Has she forgotten that I was the one who tied her hair this morning?

The man who humbled himself to come here was disappointed by the turn of events.

Regardless, he still stepped into the apartment unit along with his two sons.

He stepped into a warm beam of light.

That night, with the owner of the apartment unit at home, Sebastian who dropped by again

with the same chilly aura, was finally not as gloomy and cold as the night before.

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Right after he entered the house, he felt warm light enveloping him, as well as the alluring

smell of food in the air. Even though the size of the apartment was only a little smaller than

sixty square meters, it was very comforting.

What the heck? This dump is actually quite cozy.

He strode into the apartment and sauntered over to the worn-out sofa.

"Daddy, do you want some water? I can pour some for you," Matteo offered sensibly. As

soon as he reached home, he immediately thought of pouring a drink for his daddy.

Sebastian accepted his offer, of course.

At that moment, he took a seat on the sofa. As he waited for his son to get water for him, he

took the time to examine this rundown apartment that was not even big enough for his

bedroom.

He came too late last night. There was no time to check out the place.

When he woke up in the morning, it had been chaotic, and he missed the chance again.

While the man sank into his thoughts, Sasha had already gone into the kitchen. She heard

from her son that the three of them had not had their dinner yet, so of course she had to get

them something to eat.

But when she looked into the refrigerator, she found herself running short for ideas.

“You... haven’t eaten either?”

She stepped out of the kitchen, cast a glance at the man on the sofa, and asked him

hesitantly.

Sebastian happened to be drinking water at that time. He turned when he heard her, and his

gaze naturally fell on her person.

How unsightly!

She was wearing loose and baggy loungewear, with a large, long-eared hoodie at the back.

Her shoulder-length short hair was not even combed properly. She simply tied it up with a

polka-dotted hairband, revealing a plain-looking face without a bit of makeup on.

Doesn’t she know how to keep up appearances? Has she forgotten that she’s the daughter

of a noble family? What happened to basic grooming?

Sebastian frowned.

Strangely though, he did not find it out of place.

On the contrary, when he saw her appearing before his eyes, his mind drew up a peculiar

image. He came home very late one night and, when she suddenly opened the door for him,

he saw bright, orange light shining at him from within.

At that moment, he felt a sense of *déjà vu*.

Sebastian arched his brows, “What do you think?”

“Didn’t you go out for dinner? How is it that none of you has eaten at all?”

“Something else came up. What’s wrong? There’s nothing left in the fridge?”

“No, it’s not that...”

Sasha quickly denied.

Of course she would not have run out of food. This was her house. She kept it well-stocked.

She just wanted to confirm whether he really wanted to stay for dinner.

And it seemed like she had gotten a definite answer.

Sasha slipped back into the kitchen again and proceeded to worry about what she could

make with the food in the refrigerator.

The kids were easy to deal with. She had bought a lot of shrimps and pasta dough that

afternoon just to make meatball ravioli for them.

But that man was another story. He was a picky eater. He was not a fan of seafood, spicy

food, and even Asian cuisine. So what could she make for him?

Perhaps I should make him some rolls?

Sasha was at a loss.

And while she was thinking about the menu, she had even forgotten that their relationship

was in a deadlock at the moment. Just two days ago, they were considering a divorce. She

yearned so much for the day to come when she would have nothing to do with him

anymore.

Truthfully, there were times when people would deceive themselves.

Once something went

deep into the bones, even if they kept reminding themselves that they did not care of it at all,

it was futile.

In the end, Sasha made extra portions of meatball ravioli for Ian and Matteo, just like what

she did for Vivian.

As for Sebastian?

She made him a pot of vegetable broth and some homemade rolls, cut up evenly. In addition

to that, she even had an orange peeled and served on the side, especially for him.

“Dinner’s ready!”

When the three kids finally saw food on the table, they all cheered, forks and knives already in their hands.

Sebastian also came to sit at the table.

When he saw the meal in front of him, he was dumbfounded. “Why is my food different?”

Sasha explained, “There’s shrimp in the ravioli. You don’t eat seafood. So I didn’t make one for you.”

She said it so casually.

However, as soon as she said that, the man who was about to reach for his fork with his

hand suddenly stopped. Then, he turned towards the woman, leveling a stern glare at Sasha

with his pair of grim-looking eyes.

Sasha realized it too late.

Oh dear, I’ve misspoken.

For a second, she panicked and broke out in cold sweat.

She had been too careless. She was his ex-wife who had only been married to him for one

year. And in that one year, they had only met once. How could she know this little fact about

him? She was supposed to be a stranger to him.

Sasha’s face turned pale, and quickly racked her brains for an excuse.

“I... I heard about it

from your housemaids. Why? Did I say something wrong? Do you actually like them? If that’s

so, I can make some for you.”

With that said, she headed to the kitchen again.

“No need. It’s true, I don’t eat seafood.”

Sebastian finally spoke. Perhaps her explanation worked.

Sasha let out a loose sigh at this point. Then, she sat down next to her children and dug in.

This was the first time they sat down for dinner together at the same table as a family. It

was not an easy feat.

Sasha secretly observed the scene before her with a hint of sadness she had not known

was there.

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Dinner lasted for over an hour.

The meal might not be as rich as the food in hotels but, because it was entirely prepared by

Sasha, the children showed their utmost support. They asked for seconds, even third

helpings until they were completely stuffed.

“Ian, do you like Mommy’s meatballs? It’s made from shrimp.”

“Yes, I do!”

Ian stabbed the last meatball with his fork and nodded without hesitation when Vivian

asked him.

The girl was happy to hear that.

She was Mommy’s loyal fan. She would support her mommy no matter what.

But when Vivian turned to look at Daddy to ask the same question, she was suddenly

spooked by the look he had on his face as he stared longingly at the plate in front of him.

Her face turned pale. She did not dare to say anything after that.

What’s Daddy looking at? Why does he look so scary all of a sudden?

It was as if Sebastian had just witnessed something unfathomable. Grave horror could be

seen projected in those dark eyes of his!

What’s up with Daddy? Does he not like Mommy’s cooking?

The little girl had a bad feeling about it.

Sasha did not notice that. She was doing the dishes in the kitchen. The children, after they

finished their food, had left a pile of dirty dishes for her to clean.

Therefore, she was not in the mood to take note of him.

If she had looked his way, she might not have stayed calm while she went about her duties.

It was a long-standing habit of hers. Sebastian never liked peeling oranges himself. He did not like having the sweet, sticky feeling of orange juice stuck on his fingers.

So, back then, whenever she went to see him in secret, she would peel an orange, cut them into several pieces, plant a toothpick on one of them, and slip the dish under his door while the Hayes family was away.

How long have I been doing that?

Sasha could not remember clearly. The first time she did it, she was in her first year of elementary school. By the time he was sent abroad, she had graduated from elementary school.

As Sasha was doing the dishes in the kitchen, she thought about the promise she had made to their eldest son. She contemplated how she should tell Sebastian that Ian could stay here.

"Little Ian, can you help me serve the grapes?"

"Okay."

Ian, who had been playing with Matteo, immediately rose and went to the kitchen to help Mommy with the grapes.

"Little Ian, listen to me. Although we have decided that you can stay here tonight, we still have to tell Daddy, alright? Can you please take these grapes to Daddy and tell him that?"

Sasha felt like a coward for sending her eldest son out to confront Sebastian.

Of course, Ian would not expose Mommy's true intentions. At the same time, he was happy to do what he was told.

But when he brought the grapes out, he could not find Daddy in the living room. While he was wondering where Daddy could be, he noticed that the door to Mommy's room was left

open.

Has Daddy gone into Mommy's room?

Ian approached the room with the grapes on a platter.

Just as he thought! When Ian got to the door, he spotted Daddy inside.

However, he was puzzled to see Daddy flipping through the books on Mommy's study table

like he was looking for something. Several books on Mommy's table, which was usually so

neat and tidy, had been turned over and strewn about.

What's Daddy doing?

Ian stepped into the room. "Daddy, what are you doing?"

Sebastian, who had been feverishly flipping through the books as though possessed, froze

when his son called him.

What am I doing?

In fact, Sebastian was not sure himself. It could be that the idea he hatched just a moment

ago had been so scary that he felt the urge to search for evidence. He could be wrong.

But, what if he wasn't?

He looked at the medical book in his hands, lost in a daze. For a long time, he did not look

away from the annotations scribbled on the pages inside.

"Daddy, I want to stay here for the night."

"What?"

"I'm not going to leave you, but I like having Mommy, Matt, and Vivi by my side. I... I like how tonight turned out."

Ian tried his best to express what he really meant.

Indeed, he had never thought about leaving Daddy, but he really enjoyed spending time in

Mommy's apartment that night. He had his mommy, his brother, and his sister here to keep

him company. It was much better here than Royal Court One, where it was cold and lonely.

Ian lifted his head and glanced hopefully at his daddy.

In the past, whenever he made the request, Daddy might give him one of his dirty looks as

an indication of disapproval. This time, surprisingly, after Ian waited anxiously for a response, his daddy did not oppose.

“Got it. I’ll pick you up tomorrow.”

“Okay...”

The whole process went shockingly well.

Ecstatic, Ian sprinted out of the room with the platter of grapes. He was in a hurry to tell

Mommy the good news.

Sasha, who was in the kitchen waiting for Ian to come back with an update, could not

believe her ears as well. “Did Daddy really say yes?”

“That’s right, Mommy.”

Under the bright lights of the kitchen, the little boy’s eyes shone so brightly that they might

as well be glowing.

Upon seeing those eyes glinting with excitement, Sasha concluded it must be true. She

allowed Ian to resume playing with his siblings while she stayed to clean up the kitchen.

After she was done, she left to check on her guests.

“Hey... what happened to you? You don’t look so well.”

As soon as Sasha arrived at the living room, she ran into Sebastian who had just come out

of her bedroom. Within the span of ten minutes, that man seemed to have transformed into

a totally different person. His face, drained of color, was scarily pale.

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Sebastian said nothing.

But his gaze fell sternly and steadily on her face for the first time in so many years.

When exactly did he start hating her?

If he remembered correctly, when he was around the age of ten, the Wand family moved into

town out of the blue. They were originally from the North. Soon after that, Mr. and Mrs.

Wand brought Sasha, who was only five years old then, to meet the Hayes. Young Sebastian

was told that the girl would be his future wife.
At that time, a ten-year-old boy had yet to grasp the meaning of love.
But, on that day, he saw with his own eyes how her parents rejoiced at the arrangement. The look of pleasure on their faces, and the way the little girl gawked at him...
They filled him with disgust.
He saw the clinging greed in their eyes. He saw the little girl's idiocy. He hated them all.
But later, the adults of the Wand family got really close to his father. They often dropped by for visits with little Sasha in tow. And whenever they came over, they would leave the foolish girl in his company.
"Sebby, would you like an orange?"
Young Sasha was actually very gentle, just like Vivian.

Every time she came to visit the Hayes and met the handsome boy who never showed his emotions, she would always offer him her favorite candy.
But Sebastian had never appreciated her kindness.
He did not like her, so naturally, he did not like everything else about her. He would snatch the candy from her, toss it on the ground, and then stomp on it a couple of times to get her to leave!
Young Sasha's eyes were always red and swollen, swimming with tears. She would go away in fear, but very soon she would come back again. She would observe him timidly, and from a short distance away. She was like a piece of sticky bubble gum that he could never seem to shake off.
But, that had only been dislike.
What really made him turn to hate her completely was that one time when he had an episode, and she happened to run into him.
Back then, no one in the Hayes family knew about Sebastian's condition. He did not confide

in any of them. He was afraid that, once his family found out about him, they would take

measures to control him or restrict his freedom.

So, at that time, he secretly contacted his uncle who was living abroad and sought his aid.

But on that day, the foolish girl saw him. She witnessed him lose control and strangle the

family cat until it took its last breath. Consumed by terror, she quickly fled the scene to tell

her parents.

Subsequently, Sebastian was taken to the hospital by his parents.

That was the beginning of his endless treatment. Even after he was taken home, he was

kept in his room in virtue of the authoritative diagnosis by the hospital.

He had not stepped

out of the house for six whole years!

It was not until six years later that his uncle finally managed to persuade his parents to send

him abroad.

Therefore, saying that he disliked Sasha barely scratched the surface.

For Sebastian, hatred had occupied the majority of his feelings towards the woman. If it had

not been for her, his uncle might have secretly snuck him abroad to undergo treatment while

his symptoms were still mild.

Unfortunately, he had to spend six years in a living hell. All because of her.

As if that was not enough, a most unbearable fate was waiting for him.

When he finally got

out of that painful abyss, he still had to marry her.

How ironic!

Sebastian stared at the woman in silence. His gaze was like a sharp sword, covered in dust

for many years. How he wanted to cut her open right then and see for himself what was

inside of her!

Ever since the incident of that particular year, he never saw little Sasha again.

However, the peeled orange he was served that night looked too familiar to him. Of course, he had been eating the exact same thing for the entirety of six terrible years. From the very beginning when he turned a blind eye to the fruit until the very last one, which appeared alongside a letter wrapped in a handkerchief.

And so he ate.

Because, on the letter, it said: Have something sweet to forget the bitterness in life.

“What’s... gotten into you? Are you having second thoughts?”

Sasha gulped.

She had never seen him look like this. The man had always worn his emotions on his sleeves in front of her. When provoked, he would fire up immediately; when obeyed, he would behave in kind.

When has he gotten so calm? The stillness is mortifying!

“No.”

Sebastian finally spoke. He slowly retracted his gaze. For an instant, his thin lips turned pale and his voice raspy, as though lead and sand had coursed through his throat.

Sasha was unnerved.

What’s gotten into him? Why’s he behaving like his life has been sucked out of him? Has

something come over him?

Sasha might be puzzled by the man’s behavior, but when she heard that he was not having

second thoughts, she was delighted. His personal troubles were not something she should

bother with.

“Okay, then. Relax, I’ll take good care of Ian. I’ll get him home when he’s ready to go back.”

She assured him.

Surprisingly, the man rejected her offer.

“There’s no need for that. I’ll come get him.”

After that, he resumed his usual arrogance and took big strides towards the door.

Sasha saw that he was leaving, so she quickly called her children to see their Daddy off.

When the man left the apartment, the four of them burst into excitement and shouted in joy.

“Yay! Little Ian’s staying here tonight! Hooray!”

“Hooray!”

“Hooray!”

Only one person was quiet.

Sebastian, who had forged a great distance between himself and the door, could still hear the cheers coming from inside.

Are they that happy?

He entered the elevator in a daze...

The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 177

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Sebastian arrived at the parking lot. He got into the car and took a moment to calm himself

before he pulled out his mobile phone.

“Hey, this is Sebastian. Previously, I asked you to do a background check on Sasha Wand.

How’s that going?”

“Pardon?”

Luke, who was jolted awake from his sleep in the middle of the night, answered the call, “Oh,

Ms. Wand? Yes, I’ve managed to find some information about her.”

“What have you found?”

“It’s about her expertise in finance, Mr. Hayes. After graduating high school, it wasn’t that

she failed the entrance exam, but she gave up the opportunity to study.

She received an

admission letter from the most famous School of Economics in Moranta!

They offered her a

place as a school-sponsored student!”

Luke could barely contain his shock as he reported to Sebastian over the phone.

This was mind-blowing indeed. No one would have thought that the daughter of the Wand family, the one who had been mocked by Avenport for an entire year for allegedly being too stupid for school, so much so that she had to marry into the Hayes family through sheer brazenness in order to continue living the lavish life...
...turned out not to be the delinquent they thought she was. On the contrary, she was actually quite remarkable!

School-sponsored student?

On the other end of the line, Sebastian was overwhelmed by the information he had just received.

“Is there a mistake? How could she be school-sponsored?”

“There’s no mistake, Mr. Hayes. I went to her high school and talked to her class teacher, who told me that herself. Apparently, we couldn’t find her school records anymore because she had completely written them off. Mr. Hayes, if you still find it hard to believe, I can head over to the School of Economics and look for the admission letter they sent to her all those years ago.”

Luke heard only silence on the other end.

There was no sound. At the moment, the man in the car had nothing to say.

Sebastian just sat there, hands on the phone, while his pair of dark, intimidating eyes stared blankly ahead. A whirlpool of emotions had come over him, bringing him down. It was absolutely terrifying.

There was no need to inspect further.

Because she had already proven her financial talents in front of him several times. That was precisely why he instructed Luke to investigate. Also, there was Raymond’s mountain villa case to consider.

Raymond's family had almost gone bankrupt five years ago. They managed to rise from the ashes after working with that woman. That had been enough evidence for Sebastian to lay his doubts to rest. Once again, a plethora of emotions welled up within Sebastian! That wretched woman! Why on earth would she do this? Did she do all that just to marry him? Does she know how great the misfortune she has cast upon the Wand family by destroying her own future? If she had enrolled at the School of Economics back then, with her talents, she could absolutely revive the Wand family. Everything she's done is preposterous!

Sebastian's fingers holding onto the steering wheel turned pale. The new knowledge left him totally disoriented. It was all unacceptable to him. From his perspective, only an idiot would do something like that. Just like she was as a child! But, why had he hated her so much over the things she did as a child, yet when he received these new chunks of information, he did not feel the same anymore? Instead, he felt a gush of irrepressible anxiety. If he continued to pursue the case, it might actually validate the absurd idea that had flashed across his mind just a while ago in Sasha's apartment. That, to him, was absolutely unacceptable. "Mr. Hayes? Are you alright?" Luke asked cautiously when he had not received any response from Sebastian for quite some time. Sebastian did not catch on immediately. For a long time, he remained seated in his car, surrounded by darkness, before he found his voice again. "What else?"

“Nothing much, really. But I managed to find the person who helped her fake her death back then.”

“Who was it?”

“It’s the doctor in charge of her prenatal examination. Name’s Dr. Kaye. It turns out she and Mrs. Wand are close friends. After Ms. Wand’s incident, it was Dr. Kaye who helped arrange for Ms. Wand and her kids to leave the country.”

Luke sent details of Dr. Kaye’s personal information to his boss’ email address as he spoke.

On the other side, Sebastian lowered his phone and clicked on the e-mail.

Indeed, Dr. Kaye was a middle-aged woman, but he did not know her. Her mother’s close friend? Then, this doctor must know a lot about Sasha, right? Since

Sasha had been willing to entrust her life to her.

Sebastian stared at the document for some time. Eventually, he took out the torn page from

a notebook he had been carrying and, using his phone, took a photo of that piece of paper

before sending it to Luke.

“Take this to Dr. Kaye. Ask her if Sasha’s left anything of the sort at her place. And if she has, bring me everything!”

“Pardon?”

Luke, who had been interrupted by a phone call from his boss in the middle of the night, was

stupefied upon receiving the photo.

What’s this? A page from a notebook? Where did he get this? It looks like annotations from

a medical journal. What does he want these for? I thought he wants to know more about

Ms. Wand’s financial talents. So why is Mr. Hayes suddenly interested in this?

Luke could not make heads or tails of it all.

But he did not question further. He thought Mr. Hayes wanted to find out about Sasha’s

sudden expertise in medicine. After all, the woman had changed so much. She might just be a Jill of all trades.

Luke hung up the phone. He decided he would pay Dr. Kaye a visit first thing in the morning.

Unbeknownst to him, his boss wanted to dig through all the information he could get just to gain further confirmation on one thing!

Sebastian returned home that night.

Then, from his study, he took out a pile of letters that had been sealed off for as long as he could remember, opened the first one, laid it flat on the table, and examined it for the longest time.

The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 178

Sasha was not aware that her careless mistake that night had put her at risk of exposure.

That night, she and the children had a ball during the time spent together.

The next day.

She had to go to work, so she woke the kids up early in the morning and sent them to preschool.

“Mommy, are you picking us up later in the afternoon?”

“Of course.”

At the preschool entrance, Sasha gently squatted down in front of her children. She

straightened out their clothes and caps to prevent them from catching a cold.

The three children were delighted to hear that their mommy would be picking them up after school.

Ian asked, “Is Daddy coming?”

The question stunned Sasha. “What?”

Why does he mention Daddy all of a sudden? Does he want Daddy to fetch them?

Sasha looked at her eldest son quizzically.

Just then, Matteo interrupted. “Oh! Mommy, what Ian means is, can Daddy come to our house for dinner? We’re not in Frontier Bay anymore. He’ll be so lonely at home. He might even lose his appetite.”
Sasha tried to process what she had just heard.

For a while, she said nothing as she turned to look at Matteo. His palm-sized face was flushed red all the way from the base of his ears. These two scoundrels...
In the end, she agreed. She promised her children that if their father came, she would not drive him away.
The kids strolled happily into the preschool after hearing that. Once inside, they discussed among themselves. Later in the afternoon, when school was out, Ian would call Daddy first. He would make up an excuse to get him to fetch them from preschool. They were so smart!

...

Half an hour later, at the hospital.
“Dr. Nancy, you’re here. You weren’t on duty yesterday. There are several special cases waiting for you.”
“Alright, I’m coming.”
As Sasha went into her consultation room to change into her uniform, she let the nurse who followed her inside place the medical records on the table. Due to her good reputation, the hospital has made great efforts to promote her services to the public ever since her arrival. After joining the team, she had treated quite a number of patients too. So, gradually, many more of them had specifically requested to see her.
Sasha put on her white coat and, after washing her hands, sat down at her desk.
“Wait a minute, who are you? You need an appointment to see Dr. Nancy. You can’t simply

barge in here!”

She picked up the first medical record and was about to read it when, suddenly, she heard a quarrel coming from outside.

What’s happening?

She whipped her head around to see what was going on.

Right at that moment, the door to the consultation room swung open from the outside with

a loud, violent kick. Bang!

“You!”

“Sasha! You think you’re a big shot around here, huh? It’s so difficult just to get a chance to see you!”

A mean and fierce-looking woman with neatly combed hair charged into the room. Even her

makeup looked aggressive. When the woman spotted Sasha, she stared daggers at the

doctor with an air of dismissive arrogance, arms folded over her chest.

Sabrina! Why’s she here?

The color drained from Sasha’s face as she began to panic.

She could not help it. This woman was a major source of her trauma. She was like the devil

in human form. Back then, while Sasha was still living with the Hayes, if it had not been for

Frederick, she would have been tortured to death by Sabrina a long time ago.

“Ho, you’re not afraid of me now, I see. Not too shabby. It’s been five years, hasn’t it? Looks

like you’ve learned a thing or two.”

Sabrina glanced at Sasha condescendingly and realized that the woman was not hiding

from her anymore. Those eyes even had the gall to look her in the face now. Sabrina let out

a melodramatic cackle.

Sabrina reached a hand out in an attempt to pat Sasha on the head, the way she would

commend a dog that had learned a new trick.

Sasha’s expression grew dark instantly!

It was like returning to those nightmarish days. Her body began to tremble as the images of her past abuse flashed across her mind one after another.

Sasha just sat there. She did not give Sabrina consent to touch her. But her breath hitched, her arms shivered in fright, and her whole person seemed to have lost consciousness. She could not move at all. She could only look despairingly at the revolting arm approaching the top of her head.

This was how a person would react after having experienced extreme trauma.

She was already convulsing. Immersed in great pain, she could not respond to anything.

Luckily, there was a nurse present. Sensing something amiss, the nurse rushed into the room. "What do you think you're doing? Dr. Nancy's working right now. If you cause any trouble, I'm calling the police!"

The nurse stepped in between the two, blocking Sasha, before shoving the vengeful woman aside.

Sasha went numb.

For one fleeting moment, she collapsed as though she had been drained of energy. The pen she had been holding fell onto the table with a thud.

Sabrina gained great satisfaction from the scene she had witnessed.

"That's more like it. I didn't think you would have changed much. That's all you can manage, isn't it? Whatever. Since you're so well-behaved, I won't argue with you for now. I'll get someone to pick you up at midnight."

After expressing her satisfaction, the woman actually told Sasha that she would get

someone to pick her up later that night.

The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 179

Why is she picking me up?

Sasha's lips were pale when she spoke, "What are you picking me up for?"

Sabrina smiled coldly. "What do you think the reason is? Sasha, even though you were able to fool my father and brush things aside with Sebastian, you'll never be a part of the Hayes family."

As Sasha stared at that woman, her mind started to wonder if she really was mentally

unstable as words on the street had allegedly claimed.

"I become a part of the Hayes? Ms. Hayes, are you even aware of the situation? Do you

know how I came back here in the first place?"

"Of course I do. Sebastian was the one who dragged you back here, right?

So what? In the

past, you also claimed that you got married into the Hayes family

because you loved

Sebastian, but in the end, it turned out that you had your own agendas."

No one had expected that she would bring up the past again.

While Sabrina stared at her with eyes full of hatred, Sasha could not

contain her rage

anymore.

"What nonsense are you talking about? What agendas can I possibly have?"

"What agendas? Don't you know it yourself? In order to marry Sebastian, you gave up on

your reputation, future, and even the Wand family. So tell me, what is

the reason then? Was

it really because of love?"

She was vicious like the devil. Every single word that came out of her mouth stung Sasha,

and it felt like a knife was piercing into her old wounds.

As Sasha stared at the woman, her eyes became bloodshot.

It was true that she did not do it purely for love. After all, no woman

would give up on

everything just because she loved a man.

There were so many other important goals in a person's life, for example, taking care of

one's parents, making one's family proud, and carrying out one's responsibilities.

Therefore, she didn't think that a woman in her right mind would give up on herself for a man.

However, she did it just that in the end. In order to marry him, she sacrificed the future of the entire Wand family, including her own. But now, she couldn't help asking herself what she did all that for.

"I actually admire you a lot. In order to make it up to my brother, you've given up so much.

Hence, I never intended to take your life. As long as you leave the children here and let me send you off to a place where no one will ever find you, then you'll be able to atone for your sins. Don't you think that's a great idea?"

With a smug expression, Sabrina glared at the woman like a tiger looking at its prey.

While she spat out those words, she looked at her freshly manicured black fingernails. It

was as if she was admiring a fine piece of artwork.

It was as if time had stood still.

The entire consultation room fell into a dead silence after she had uttered those words.

The nurse who was standing between both of them suddenly felt fearful as she noticed that

Sasha wasn't trembling anymore. With that, the room's atmosphere abruptly became abnormally still.

"D-Doctor?"

"You may leave the room now," Sasha stated composedly.

Upon hearing that, the nurse glanced at the two women apprehensively, then scurried out of the room.

Click.

The consultation room's door locked from the inside.

Sabrina, who was busy admiring her nails, suddenly froze and asked, "What are you doing?"

After brushing a few strands of hair in front of her eyes to the side, Sasha pulled out the chair that she was previously sitting on.

"Do you know how I spent those five years abroad?"

"What do you mean?"

Sabrina finally put down her hand and looked Sasha in the eye. To her surprise, she noticed

that the woman was acting rather differently than before.

"The first year I was abroad, I had to work casual jobs while bringing up my children

because they were very young. Then one day, the owner of the restaurant I was working at

tried to take advantage of me, so I picked up a stack of bowls and smashed them on his head!"

Sasha continued, "In the second year, since my children were a bit older, I entrusted them to

my landlady, but she tried to sell them to child traffickers. After I managed to find her, I cut

off all the tendons in her arms and legs, causing her irreparable injuries.

And in the third year..."

"Enough! What are you trying to say, Sasha?"

Sabrina's face took on a ghastly expression as she couldn't bear listening anymore. With an

abrupt yell, she interrupted Sasha furiously.

At that moment, she didn't even notice that she had already taken a few steps back.

You don't want to hear any more? But I haven't even finished yet.

Staring at her with bloodshot eyes, Sasha exuded a murderous aura that had not appeared

in a long time. At the same time, she dragged the chair and took another step forward.

"What's wrong? Can't bear to listen to it anymore? Didn't you want the children? Listen to

what I have to say. If you're able to walk out of here alive, I'll give you the children."

Her lips finally curled up into a smile. That was the first time she smiled so brightly in front

of the woman who had tormented her for six whole years.

Traces of fear suddenly appeared in Sabrina's eyes.

The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 180

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She had never seen Sasha smiling in front of her.

The moment she saw the latter's menacing smile, the hair on her neck stood up, and her

entire body was covered in goosebumps. Sabrina had always looked down on Sasha, but

right then, she was terrified like never before as Sasha started approaching her.

"What did you say? Say that once more!"

"I said, over my dead body!"

Upon saying that, Sasha flung the chair toward her. Smash! The chair immediately broke

into pieces the moment it landed on the defenseless woman.

"Ah!"

"Don't shout. It sounds horrible! You're the precious daughter of the Hayes family. It wouldn't

be good if word got out that you were beaten up by your ex-sister-in-law here." The moment

Sabrina started screaming, Sasha hurried over and covered her mouth.

Immediately after, she took a needle out of her pocket and swiftly stabbed it into her nape.

"Dr. Nancy? Are you alright?"

Just as she lay the woman down on the ground, the nurse had already brought some people

along with her. Unable to detect any movements in the room, she anxiously yelled from the

outside.

When Sasha heard that, she did not panic in the slightest.

She proceeded to remove the needle first, then dragged the woman and lay her on the bed.

After she kicked the broken pieces of the chair under the bed, she walked over and opened the door.

“Dr. Nancy? You...”

“Everything’s fine. She’s a former patient of mine who has some mental problems, and I’ve just calmed her down. Why don’t you contact the psychiatric department and see if there’s a room?” Sasha uttered flatly.

Immediately after hearing that, the doctors, who had been called over to help out, gawked at her in amazement.

“My God, Dr. Nancy, that’s incredible. You’re even able to handle a psychiatric patient.”

“I told you so. When I saw her earlier, I knew that the woman didn’t seem normal. She even

wanted to assault Dr. Nancy.” The nurse joined in the discussion.

Soon after, they went to inform the psychiatric department. Moments later, Sabrina was carried out of Sasha’s consultation room, and peace was restored once again.

In fact, Sabrina was considered lucky this time around.

Back in the days when Sasha was in Clear, anyone who bullied her and her children would face a tragic outcome.

That was why there was a famous saying, “Never threaten a mother with her child.”

With that, Sasha resumed her work in the hospital and didn’t mention Sabrina at all for the rest of the day.

...

At Hayes Corporation.

That afternoon, Sebastian received Dr. Kaye’s notebooks from Luke.

“Mr. Hayes, everything is here. Dr. Kaye even said that it was all her idea to fake Ms. Wand’s

death back then. She wishes that you won’t make things difficult for her.

You can go directly

to her if you’re dissatisfied.”

As Luke brought over the notebooks, he even relayed the doctor's words to him.

The fact that the doctor owned up to that matter proved that his suspicions were right.

There was definitely something fishy between that woman and the doctor.

Sebastian picked up the notebooks and began to read them one by one.

They were all medical study notes, and there was a total of seven or eight books. However,

the contents were all messily scribbled, which differed from her neat and tidy finance notes.

It seemed that she had a tough time learning all this knowledge.

"Oh, by the way, that doctor even said that Ms. Wand wasn't really good at this. Back then,

when she was pestering the doctor to teach her, there were many things she wasn't able to

understand, especially psychology."

"Psychology?"

Sitting at his desk while flipping through the notebooks, Sebastian suddenly lifted his head.

Luke nodded. "Yes, psychology. She said that Ms. Wand was hellbent on learning this.

However, she wasn't fit for this field as she couldn't master it no matter how much the

doctor taught her."

Luke pointed at the bottom half of the stack of notebooks.

Sebastian was speechless.

Suddenly, he didn't feel like going through those notebooks because he noticed that the one

in his hand was from her high school days, and the handwriting in it was very similar to the

ones he had laid out on the table last night.

Those were ten years of letters.

From the six years he had been locked up at home to the time he went abroad, he would

send anonymous letters to his uncle every month, which meant he had been sending them

since he was in primary school.

Hence, he sat there motionlessly, lost in his thoughts. So it seems that my speculation was right.

I have never truly escaped her!
Even though it was all grey outside on that winter morning, the penthouse suite was well lit up. However, as he sat there with the lights flickering in his eyes, he exuded a frightening aura, as if a storm was brewing in him. The atmosphere in the entire office was suffocating. His gaze was fixated on a spot while he experienced a mixture of emotions, despair, anger, hatred, and murderous intent!
What is happening to him?
Why has he suddenly become so scary?
Luke was terrified, and he didn't dare to make a sound. All he could do was stand there and stare at Sebastian.