

## TRADING MY EX FOR HIS UNCLE

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# Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Wilhelm's eyes were red, filled with reluctance as he looked at Jane. "Mommy... I don't want to leave you..."

At that moment, Jane was overwhelmed by a wave of sorrow.

The thought of Wilhelm being taken away by Gabriel, with no guarantee she'd ever see him again, made her heart ache as if it were being torn apart. She hugged Wilhelm tightly and looked up at Gabriel. "I don't want your money anymore. I want custody of my son!"

They were divorced now. Gabriel would undoubtedly remarry soon. When he had a new wife and child, there would be no place for Wilhelm in his life. Gabriel's expression remained cold. "Jane, are you insane? What makes you think I'd ever give you custody?"

Considering her past actions-hitting Wilhelm and intentionally giving him allergenic food-Gabriel was resolute in not leaving Wilhelm in her care. "I gave birth to Wilhelm! How dare you take him away? You're just doing this to chase after Nyla! Why even bother with Wilhelm?" Jane spat.

He despised her so much. If he really ended up with Nyla and they had another child, Wilhelm would surely remind him of her. It would stir even more resentment toward the boy.

The mere thought of this possibility solidified Jane's resolve to fight for her son.

"And leave him here with you, so you can keep mistreating him?" Gabriel mocked.

Jane's arms froze around Wilhelm as she gritted her teeth. "I'll never hit him again. I won't mistreat him. He's my child, and from now on, he'll only have me. I won't let you take him away."

Gabriel sneered. "Now you want to act like a loving mother? I won't give you the chance to hurt him again."

With that, he stepped forward, intent on prying Wilhelm from her arms.

Jane refused to let go.

As they struggled, Wilhelm burst into tears once more.

Wendy couldn't bear to watch any longer. She stepped in, her voice firm. "Enough! Can't you see you're scaring the boy?"

She gently pulled Wilhelm out of Jane's arms and looked at them both. "Ms. Wilkie, Mr. Hackett, I know I'm just a servant and shouldn't say this, but could you two act like adults for your child's sake? Divorce is already hard enough on him. Without you two fighting in front of him!"

Jane took a deep breath and turned to Gabriel. "Treat Wilhelm well. You're running a major company and won't have time to care for him. I'm planning to go abroad soon. Having him with me is the best option."

Gabriel's face remained expressionless, his silence speaking volumes. He didn't trust Jane and wasn't planning on letting her have custody. Jane bit her lip and turned to Wendy. "Take Wilhelm to the study for now."

Wendy nodded and led the boy away.

Jane looked up at Gabriel. "I hit him before and gave him that cake to cause an allergic reaction because I was desperate to see you to save our marriage."

"Now we're divorced. Wilhelm is my child. Why wouldn't I treat him well? I'm begging you. Let me have custody of him."

Gabriel's eyes were sharp, his words

icy. "Jane, drop the act. Since you used him to manipulate me, you'll do it again for something else. Your so-called love for him will always come second to your self-interest. Why would I ever trust you with him?"

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Nyla paused, a flicker of surprise crossing her face before she said, "Because of me? That's impossible."

Five years ago, Gabriel had confessed his feelings for her, but that seemed like a lifetime ago.

Now, he had a family with Jane and even a child.

How could he possibly still have feelings for her? She didn't think herself attractive enough to make him leave Jane.

"I'm just repeating what I heard. Don't take it seriously," Valarie said. "Who knows what's going on in his head? Maybe he just doesn't like Jane anymore and is using you as an excuse."

"Hmm. Alright, I've got to go. I have an experiment to prepare for," Nyla said.

After ending the call, Nyla didn't dwell on Valarie's words. Instead, she set her phone aside and focused on preparing the lab equipment for her experiment.

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News of Gabriel's divorce had reached Damon, who sat in his office on the top floor. His sharp eyes narrowed, and his entire demeanor turned icy, radiating danger.

It seemed Gabriel was preparing to take direct action against Prospectus Technology.

"Mr. Sumner, Gabriel returned the gaming company to the Wilkie Group as part of the divorce settlement," Spencer reported.

Damon's expression remained impassive. "Let's wait and see what his next move is."

"Understood," Spencer replied.

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Later that evening, Nyla brought up the divorce news with Damon on their way home.

"I heard about that," Damon said, gripping the folder so tightly his knuckles turned white.

He chose not to tell Nyla that Gabriel's real target was her, sparing her unnecessary worry.

Noticing Damon's somber expression, Nyla asked, "Is something wrong? Is the company facing issues?"

"No, nothing to worry about," Damon replied, his voice calm and reassuring as his gaze softened toward her. "Really?" Nyla asked, seeking confirmation.

"If there were any problems, I'd still be at the office right now," Damon answered.

Nyla nodded, relieved. "That's true."

When

arrived home, Mason ran

up to them, a drawing in hand.

"Mommy, look! I drew a

look! I drew a picture of

the three of us today!"

of us today!"

Nyla bent down to take the drawing, smiling as she saw the stick figures of a happy family holding hands.

"It's amazing, sweetheart!" she praised, kissing his cheek, her voice filled with warmth.

Mason beamed with pride and rushed to show his drawing to Damon, who also praised him.

Mason's grin stretched from ear to ear as he announced, "I'm going to hang this in my room!"

Nyla chuckled. "Alright. Mommy will help you put it up after dinner."

"Thanks, Mommy!" Mason chirped.

During dinner, Lydia mentioned that Mason's teacher had shared news about a parent-child sports day at school on Friday. The teacher had requested that both parents try to attend.

Turning to Damon, Nyla asked, "I can take the day off. Do you have time on Friday? If not, I can go by myself."

"It's my first time attending my son's sports day. Even if I didn't have time, I'd make time," Damon replied.

"Okay, I'll make sure to request leave," Nyla said.

After dinner, Nyla went upstairs to help Mason put up his drawing, while Damon headed to his study.

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Once seated, he called Spencer. "Reschedule Friday's meetings to Thursday and send any urgent files to my office in the next two days. I need my Friday cleared."

"Understood. Is there something specific planned for Friday?" Spencer asked.

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"Mm," Damon hummed in response, flipping through some documents. "Buddy has a parent-child sports day at his kindergarten. I'll be attending." "Got it," Spencer replied.

Friday morning arrived quickly.

After breakfast, the family of three headed to Mason's school.

Nyla wore a pastel pink tracksuit with a simple white T-shirt underneath, her long hair tied in a neat ponytail. With light makeup, she looked effortlessly elegant.

Damon wore a matching black tracksuit.

Seeing him in casual wear, without his usual suits, Nyla thought it made him look several years younger. If not for his commanding presence, one might easily mistake him for a university student.

Mason, dressed in a light gray tracksuit, looked adorable and well-behaved.

As they walked into the school, they quickly attracted the attention of both parents and children.

Noticing the admiring glances from his classmates, Mason walked with his head held high, exuding newfound confidence.

His homeroom teacher, Laura, approached them with a welcoming smile.

Her eyes briefly widened in admiration when she saw Damon and Nyla, recognizing Mason's good looks as clearly inherited from them.

"Good morning! The sports day will officially start at 10:00 a.m. In the meantime, feel free to explore the campus or head to the playground. Seats with your child's name have already been marked."

"Thank you, Ms. Ferrier," Nyla replied with a smile.

"Of course! If you need anything, just text me," Laura said before heading off to manage the other families.

After strolling around the school, Damon and Nyla took Mason to the playground.

As they found their designated seats, they noticed Gabriel and Wilhelm seated nearby.

Damon's expression darkened, his gaze locking onto Gabriel with icy precision.

Gabriel, however, greeted him with a faint smile, unfazed by the tension.

"What a coincidence, Mr. Sumner. You found time to attend the event?" he asked.

Damon sat beside him, answering

with a straight face, "If you can find time to run Nyce Tech, scheme against others, and still attend, so can I."

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"Business is like a battlefield, Mr. Sumner. It's all about strategy and staying ahead. You'd agree, wouldn't you?" Gabriel replied.

Damon nodded, understanding

Gabriel's implied meaning.

"Completely. Let's just hope that

when the tables turn, you'll handle it just as gracefully."

"Of course," Gabriel answered.

Meanwhile, Nyla, holding Mason in her lap, softly chatted with him. She seemed oblivious to the underlying rivalry simmering between the two men.

Wilhelm sat next to Gabriel, his gaze lingering on Mason, who was laughing happily in Nyla's arms. His eyes darkened with jealousy.

Why did Mason's parents love him so much? Why did his own parents have to divorce?

"Daddy, is Mommy really not coming today?" Wilhelm asked, his gaze turning away from Mason.

Gabriel looked down at him, his tone softening. "No, your mom hurt her leg. She's in a wheelchair and can't attend."

"She could've come and just watched from the side... Daddy, I wish Mommy could come," Wilhelm muttered.

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Wilhelm gazed at Gabriel with hopeful eyes, full of anticipation.

After a brief moment of eye contact, Gabriel finally nodded. "Alright. Sit here for a while. I'll call her and see if she's willing to come." Wilhelm's face lit up immediately. "Okay, thank you, Daddy!"

He firmly believed that Jane would come once she received the call.

Gabriel set Wilhelm down and stepped aside to make the call.

A few minutes later, he returned with a grim expression. "Wil, your mom is in the hospital right now and can't come."

"Oh." Disappointment flickered across Wilhelm's face, but he quickly masked it.

His mother didn't want him anymore. If he upset his father, and the latter abandoned him too, then no one would want him.

The thought filled Wilhelm with a deep sense of injustice, and his eyes reddened.

Gabriel assumed Wilhelm was upset about Jane's absence.

Squatting down to his level, he reassured him, "Wil, don't be sad. The next time the kindergarten has a sports day, your mom will definitely come." "Really? But you two are divorced. Will Mommy still want me?" Wilhelm asked.

Looking into Wilhelm's teary eyes, Gabriel hesitated momentarily before nodding firmly. "Yes, of course. I promise."

If Jane stopped fighting for custody and calmed down emotionally, Gabriel wouldn't stop her from seeing Wilhelm. After all, no matter what, Jane was Wilhelm's biological mother.

Keeping them apart would only deepen Wilhelm's resentment toward him.

"Okay..." Wilhelm replied softly.

Gabriel wiped the tears from Wilhelm's face and said gently,

"Alright, no more crying. If you really want to see Mommy, we'll show her the prize after the sports day if we win one, okay?"

Upon hearing this, Wilhelm's attention shifted, and he nodded. "Okay."

At 10:00 a.m., the sports day officially began after Laura's brief opening speech.

The first event was the three-legged race. Each child would pair with a parent, tying their adjacent legs together as they raced to the finish

line. The first team to arrive would win.

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Damon and Mason teamed up for the race, while Nyla stood on the sidelines, cheering them on.

Gabriel watched the happy, united family scene from nearby, his eyes cold.

Soon, it would all change. In the near future, the man standing beside Nyla would be him.

Once the participants were ready, the referee gave the signal to start, and everyone began walking toward the finish line.

Some parent-child pairs moved with great coordination, racing ahead, while others stumbled, barely advancing a meter as they struggled to keep pace with the more synchronized teams.

The fastest pairs were Mason and Damon, along with Wilhelm and Gabriel.

Wilhelm was determined to win the prize to show Jane, so he focused intently. His natural coordination with Gabriel made their pace swift.

Meanwhile, Mason was determined

to earn five stars for winning first place. The participant with the most stars at the end of the day would

receive a mysterious grand prize, which he planned to gift to Nyla.

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The two teams remained neck and neck as they neared the last ten meters.



Wilhelm noticed that Mason and Damon were slightly ahead of him, and anxiety crept in. He subconsciously quickened his pace.

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However, Wilhelm's sudden acceleration didn't match Gabriel's speed, causing him to stumble forward.

Gabriel quickly grabbed the back of Wilhelm's shirt and pulled him upright.

"Wil, are you okay?" he asked.

Wilhelm, flushed and anxious, replied, "I'm fine, Daddy. Let's hurry, or we won't win!"

The more Wilhelm rushed, the harder it became to synchronize their steps. They ended up stuck in place for several moments.

Meanwhile, Damon and Mason crossed the finish line, securing first place.

Nyla smiled as she wiped the sweat from Damon and Mason's foreheads with a tissue. "You two were amazing. Great job! Are you tired? Have some water."

She pulled out a thermos and handed it to Damon while giving Mason a small, duck-themed water bottle.

Mason took a sip and smiled brightly. "Thanks, Mommy!"

His face beamed with happiness as he proudly held up his five stars, determined to keep trying to win the mysterious prize for his mom.

Earlier, Mason had shared his plan for the grand prize with Damon, who had immediately agreed. The two worked together toward that goal. Unfortunately, Gabriel and Wilhelm, who had fallen behind due to their earlier misstep, didn't even place in the top three.

After the race, Wilhelm's eyes brimmed with tears as he felt a wave of sadness.

Gabriel squatted down to comfort him. "Wil, don't be discouraged. There are more events ahead. If we win just one of them, we can still show the certificate to your mom."

Wilhelm wiped his tears and nodded. "Okay, Daddy..."

Once Gabriel had comforted Wilhelm, he took the boy's hand and led him to the next event.

The following events didn't go any better.

Whether it was Damon and Mason beating them again or unexpected mistakes on their part, they couldn't manage to claim first place.

By the end of the day, Wilhelm held

several second-place certificates but couldn't stop his tears from flowing. "All we got was second place. Mommy won't be happy when she sees these. She'll be disappointed."

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In the past, Jane had always been strict with him. If he didn't win first place, she'd show her displeasure.

"It's okay, Wil. You did your best and were amazing," Gabriel reassured him.

Still, no amount of gentle words could console Wilhelm this time.

He threw the certificates on the ground and sobbed. "I didn't win! I can't see Mommy now! Mommy will be mad at me! It's all your fault!"

"Wil, it's okay even when we don't win first place. You-" Before Gabriel could finish, Wilhelm pushed him hard.

Caught off guard while crouched, Gabriel fell backward onto the ground.

His face darkened, and his voice

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grew cold. "Wilhelm, who taught that it's okay to lash out at others when you don't get what you want?"

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The sudden change in his demeanor startled Wilhelm.

Feeling even more wronged, he

wailed loudly, "I hate you! You're a

useless dad! A bad dad! I wante

mom! Waaah! I don't want you anymore!"

Wilhelm's cries echoed across the playground, drawing the attention of everyone around them.

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Mason glanced at Wilhelm, whose face was streaked with tears and snot, his expression filled with disdain.

Seriously, how old was he to still be crying like a baby?

Gabriel's already cold expression, darkened further as he felt the weight of the crowd's stares turning toward him and Wilhelm.

It was like an icy wind sweeping through the playground. Everyone instinctively tugged their coats tighter.

Having received significant donations from Gabriel, the principal had explicitly instructed Laura to ensure nothing upset him during the sports day.

Seeing the scene unfold, Laura hurried over with a nervous smile and asked, "Wil, what's wrong? Are you feeling unwell?"

Emboldened by the attention, Wilhelm only escalated his tantrum. He threw himself to the ground, rolling and crying loudly, repeatedly demanding to see his mom.

Gabriel felt his temples throb. Never in his life had he been so embarrassed.

"Wilhelm, get up!" he ordered, glaring at the boy on the ground.

Wilhelm looked up defiantly. "I won't! If you don't let me see Mommy, I'm not getting up!"

Gabriel forced himself to remain calm and nodded. "Fine. Get up, and I'll take you to see your mom."

"Really?" Wilhelm eyed him suspiciously. After all, Gabriel had refused just moments ago. Why the sudden change?

"Really. But first, get up," Gabriel replied.

"No! Call her now! I want to talk to Mommy first!" Wilhelm demanded.

Gabriel took a deep breath, suppressing the urge to walk away. He pulled out his phone and dialed Jane's number.

Soon, Jane's cold voice came through. "What do you want?"

"Wil says he wants to see you," Gabriel replied curtly.

Jane snickered. "Weren't you the one who swore I'd never see him again?"

Gabriel said nothing and handed the phone to Wilhelm.

Wilhelm quickly snatched it and ran off to a quieter corner.

"Mommy, I miss you! Can I come to the hospital to see you?" he asked.

Hearing Wilhelm's voice tugged at Jane's heart. She was about to agree when she remembered what Wendy had told her-it was best for Wilhelm to stay with Gabriel

She took a deep breath and steadied her tone. Wil, Mommy is very busy right now. I don't have time today. How about I see you another day?"

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"No! I want to see you today!" Wilhelm insisted.

"Be a good boy. Mommy really can't today. Give the phone back to your dad, okay?" Jane coaxed.

Wilhelm blinked, fat tears falling from his cheeks. "I knew it! You don't want me anymore! I hate you!"

He threw Gabriel's phone to the ground and bolted toward the school gates.

Alarmed, Gabriel retrieved his phone and chased after Wilhelm.

The gates were locked, and Wilhelm was already climbing them in desperation.

Gabriel grabbed him down in one swift motion. His voice was sharp, his expression cold. "Wilhelm, have you had enough?"

"Let go of me! I hate you! I don't want you or Mommy anymore!" Wilhelm wailed.

He thrashed wildly in Gabriel's grip, his face flushed with tears, his eyes filled with defiance. He reserved a

cornered animal, baring its teeth in vain.

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Gabriel sighed, releasing his grip but keeping hold of Wilhelm's jacket to prevent him from running off.

"Wilhelm, your mom and I are divorced. You'll see her less often now. You need to accept that instead of throwing tantrums," he said.

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"No! I hate you! I don't want to live with you!" Wilhelm yelled.

"Whether you like it or not, the court decided you're staying with me," Gabriel stated flatly.

As they argued, Nyla and Damon approached, holding Mason's hand.

Wilhelm's eyes flickered with jealousy and resentment when he spotted Mason.

Summoning unexpected strength, he broke free from Gabriel and lunged at him.

Why did Mason get to have loving parents while his were abandoning him?!

The attack was so sudden that no one could react in time.

Mason was shoved to the ground, wide-eyed with shock.

Wilhelm was about to strike him when Damon pushed him aside and pulled Mason up.

"Buddy, are you okay?" Damon asked, his voice full of concern.

Mason nodded. "I'm okay, Daddy."

Luckily, his thick winter coat had cushioned the fall.

Wilhelm, sprawled on the ground after being shoved, stared blankly at the scene. He watched as Damon and Nyla fussed over Mason, checking him for injuries.

When he had fallen, his mother had never cared if he was hurting. She had yelled at him for being clumsy, and his father hadn't bothered-merely watching coolly from the side.

Jealousy burned hotter in Wilhelm's chest. Why did Mason get such caring parents while he didn't?

Suddenly, he was yanked off the ground by his collar. He looked up to see Gabriel's thunderous face.

"Wilhelm, do you even know what you just did?!" Gabriel demanded.

Wilhelm froze under his father's icy glare.

Tears welled up again, but Gabriel didn't care.

He dragged the boy over to Damon and Nyla to apologize. "Mr. Summer, Nyla, I'm terribly sorry. This is entirely my fault for not teaching Wilhelm better. Is Buddy hurt?"

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Damon's voice was sharp. "Your son deliberately pushed mine to the ground and tried to hit him. Do you think a few words of apology are enough?"

Wilhelm had gotten physical with Mason before, and now he had charged at him again, for no reason. If Damon hadn't been there, Mason might have actually been hurt.

Gabriel knew he was in the wrong.

"I understand, Mr. Sumner. If Buddy doesn't feel well, I'll cover all medical expenses. If there are any issues, I'll take full responsibility," he replied humbly.

"As for Wilhelm, I'll make sure to educate him properly to ensure this doesn't happen again," he added.

Damon snorted. "If I remember

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correctly, he's provoked Buddy

before. For him to get physical right in front of Nyla and me, as well as all these other parents-who knows if he's been bullying other kids behind our backs?"

The crowd murmured, parents exchanging uneasy glances.

Some began questioning their children about whether Wilhelm had bullied them before.

This wasn't just a personal dispute anymore.

At a prestigious kindergarten like

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this, most of the families were powerful and influential. If this wasn't handled properly, Gabriel could face far more than just damaged pride.

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Offending too many people could lead to trouble. If someone ever decided to stab Gabriel in the back, it was unlikely anyone would be willing to help him.

Gabriel's eyes darkened as he glanced at Damon, but he quickly spoke up. "Mr. Sumner, your words seem a bit unfair. Wilhelm has always gotten along well with his classmates.

"Before Buddy transferred, there hadn't been any issues. Everyone can attest to that, and Ms. Ferrier can confirm it as well.

"It was indeed Wilhelm's fault this time, but kids pushing and shoving during arguments is normal. Accusing him of bullying other children feels like an overreach, don't you think?"

Damon smiled. "I'm merely raising a valid concern, not accusing him outright. However, if he can publicly shove Buddy today, who's to say he won't shove another classmate tomorrow?"

"You're speculating about things that haven't happened. Mr. Sumner, it seems excessive to assume the worst about a child this young," Gabriel countered.

"Oh, you misunderstand me," Damon replied with mock politeness. "I'm only looking out for the safety of the other children. No parent wants their kid coming home from school covered in bruises, do they?"

As soon as he finished, murmurs of agreement rippled through the crowd of parents.

"That's right. I saw Wilhelm charge at Mason out of nowhere. His aggressiveness was scary-even as an adult, I felt uneasy. I can't imagine what it'd be like if he suddenly went after my child."

"Maybe he's jealous Mason won so many first-place medals today, while he didn't win a single one."

"If he reacts like this over something

so trivial, who knows what else he

might do think I need to

reconsider if this is the right environment for my child. Having an unstable classmate around is too dangerous."

The murmurs grew louder, and Gabriel's expression darkened by the second.

Taking a deep breath, he addressed the group. "Everyone, I understand Wilhelm was in the wrong today. He's just a young boy, and with my recent divorce from his mother, his emotions have been running high. That might be concerning to you. I sincerely apologize to Mason and promise it won't happen again.

"If he ever lays hands on another child, I'll immediately withdraw him from the school. I hope everyone can give him another chance." Most of the parents knew about Gabriel and Jane's divorce.

Looking at Wilhelm, his tear-streaked face and red eyes, some of them began to feel a twinge of sympathy. After all, he was just a kid, and his parents' divorce must have been a tough blow.

Sensing the change in their attitudes, Gabriel felt a glimmer of hope and was about to capitalize on it when Damon spoke again.

"If his emotions are so unstable, I'd suggest you take him home for a while, Mr. Hackett. Bring him back to school once he's calmed down.

"After all, your divorce is between you and your ex-wife-it's not anyone else's responsibility to bear the consequences. And it's certainly not an excuse for him to lash out at his classmates," Damon reasoned.

Gabriel froze.

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After a long pause, he bowed his head slightly and said, "You're right, Mr. Sumner: I'll keep Wilhelm at home for the time being. Once I'm certain he's emotionally stable, he'll return to school. I hope that will be acceptable to you?"

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Damon raised an eyebrow and said flatly, "It's not about my approval. It's about ensuring the safety of the other children."



Gabriel kept his gaze low, anger flickering in his eyes. What else could he say?

"Understood. I've learned my lesson today, Mr. Sumner," he gritted through his teeth.

The crowd began to disperse.

Most parents hurriedly took their children and left, keeping a noticeable distance from Wilhelm and Gabriel as they passed, still wary that Wilhelm might lash out unpredictably.

Before long, only Damon, Nyla, and Mason remained at the gate with Gabriel and Wilhelm.

Gabriel turned to Damon with a cold expression. "If there's nothing else, Mr. Sumner, I'll take Wilhelm and leave now."

"Mr. Hackett, shouldn't your son apologize to Buddy?" Damon asked.

Gabriel's expression hardened.

Taking a deep breath, he looked down at Wilhelm and said sternly, "Wilhelm, apologize to Buddy."

Wilhelm lifted his chin defiantly. "I won't! I didn't do anything wrong!"

"Wilhelm, behave!" Gabriel snapped.

"No! I'm not apologizing!" Wilhelm shouted, yanking his hand free and bolting toward the gate.

Gabriel turned back to Damon. "Mr. Sumner, let me apologize on his behalf for now. I'll bring him by to apologize properly another day."

He hurried off to chase Wilhelm, leaving Damon watching him coldly.

Nyla touched Damon's arm gently. "Let's go home."

"Mm," Damon hummed, crouching down to Mason's level. "Buddy, Wilhelm will apologize to you next time, okay?"

Mason nodded. "Okay."

The three of them got into their car and drove home.

When they arrived, Mason handed Nyla the mysterious grand prize his teacher had given him. "Mommy, this is the prize Daddy and I won today. It's for you!"

Nyla's eyes lit up in surprise when she saw the golden rose brooch. She beamed.

During the prize-giving ceremony, she had noticed Damon and Mason acting secretive as if they were hiding something from her.

Before she could ask, Wilhelm's outburst had drawn her attention away.

She accepted the brooch. "Thank you, sweetheart. I love it. Let me give you a kiss to say thanks!"

She leaned in and kissed Mason on the cheek.

Damon, standing off to the side, interjected, "I want one too."

Nyla shot him a glance. "Aren't you a little too old to be competing with your son for attention?"

"I helped win that brooch too," Damon quipped, leaning closer and presenting his cheek.

Nyla pushed him away playfully. "Alright, it's time for dinner. We'll see about a kiss later."

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After dinner, Nyla went upstairs to rest, but Damon followed her.

As she reached for her pajamas in the closet, Damon's voice sounded behind her. "Nyla, aren't you forgetting something?"

She turned to see him tilting his left

cheek toward her, making her laugh despite herself. Standing on her tiptoes, she moved in to kiss his cheek.

Just as her lips were about to touch his skin, he turned his head.

Their lips met instead, catching Nyla off guard. She tried to pull away, but Damon wrapped an arm

around waist, deepening the kiss.

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When they finally parted, Nyla's face was flushed, her head spinning slightly.