

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

C 1101

There was a brief pause on the other end of the line before Nyla replied in a disappointed voice, "Alright. Just make sure you eat something. I'll call Spencer later to check if you've eaten. Don't skip meals and upset your stomach."

"Alright. I'll send you a picture when I eat," Damon replied.

"Make it a video call instead-how do I know you're not lying to me otherwise?" Nyla challenged.

Damon chuckled helplessly. "Fine. I'll call you when I eat."

"Okay. I won't bother you anymore. Get back to work," Nyla said.

After hanging up, Nyla went to the kitchen and told Lydia to prepare fewer dishes for dinner since Damon wouldn't be home.

Lydia nodded. "Got it, Ms. Kinsey. I'll skip the fish and greens."

"Perfect," Nyla agreed.

Back in the living room, Mason was busy putting his toys into a storage box.

Nyla crouched down to help. "Buddy, why aren't you playing anymore?"

"I'm sleepy, Mommy. I want to take a nap," Mason said.

Seeing his drowsy eyes, Nyla replied, "Alright. Let's finish tidying up your toys, and then you can wash your hands. I'll take you upstairs for a nap. How does that sound?"

"Okay," Mason answered.

Once they finished, Nyla helped Mason wash his hands and tucked him in upstairs.

When she came back downstairs, a maid approached with a glass of orange juice. "Ms. Kinsey, Lydia asked me to bring you this."

Noticing the maid looked unfamiliar, Nyla frowned slightly. "I haven't seen you before. You weren't working in the kitchen, were you?"

The maid nodded. "I used to work in the garden, taking care of the plants. Lydia said her back was sore today, so she asked me to help in the kitchen for a day."

"Got it. Leave it on the table. I'll drink it later," Nyla replied.

"Of course, Ms. Kinsey." The maid placed the juice on the table and returned to the kitchen.

Nyla watched her retreating figure, hesitating briefly.

Just as she was about to follow her into the kitchen, her phone rang.

Seeing Damon's name on the screen, she answered, "What's up?"

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"Nyla, I left an important file in the study. Can you bring it to me now? I have a meeting in 40 minutes, and Spencer won't make it back in time," belongs to

Damon asked. Content jan

As Nyla turned toward the study, she asked, "Which file? Where is it?"

"It should be in the second drawer on the left side of the desk-a tender

document," Damon detailed.

Moments later, she found the file and confirmed, "Is it the tender for the project in the city's west?"

"Yes," Damon replied.

"Alright, I'll bring it over now," Nyla answered.

She took the document and instructed the driver to take her to Prospectus Technology.

Half an hour later, she arrived. As she waited for the elevator, her phone rang again.

Seeing the name on the screen, she d answered, "I'm alread

smiled

dow Give me ten minutes"

Damon's urgent voice cut her off. "Nyla, Buddy has been taken by Gabriel!"

"What?" Nyla blurted.

The file slipped from her hands as her mind went blank.

When she recovered, she gripped the phone tightly. "What are you talking about? Buddy's at home taking a nap. How could Gabriel have taken him?"

"I'm coming down now. Wait for me," Damon said, and the call ended abruptly.

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Nyla clutched her phone, her eyes wide with disbelief and confusion.

How could Mason have been taken by Gabriel?

Wait...

She quickly dialed the villa's phone number, gripping her phone so tightly that her knuckles turned white.

Buddy...

The call rang and rang until it disconnected automatically. No one answered. Her heart sank.

Frantically, she dialed Lydia's number next. Still, no answer.

Suddenly, her mind flashed to the maid who had brought her orange juice earlier.

That maid... she looked so unfamiliar. Nyla had felt a flicker of suspicion at the time, but Damon's call had interrupted her thoughts, and she'd let it go.

Her face turned pale as realization dawned.

If only she had been more alert could Mason have avoided this danger?

"Nyla! Nyla!"

A firm hand grabbed her shoulder, shaking her back to reality.

She looked up to see Damon's anxious face, and tears instantly welled in her eyes.

"Damon... Buddy... Did Gabriel really take him? Tell me you're joking. You're lying, aren't you?"

Damon's expression was as grim as hers. "I wish I were. The villa staff reported that Buddy was taken shortly after you left."

"It's my fault... It's all my fault," Nyla cried. "If I'd been more careful earlier— noticed that something was off about that maid—this wouldn't have happened."

The thought of Mason being taken while she was on her way to Prospectus Technology made her chest tighten with unbearable pain.

Damon pulled her into his arms. "Nyla, this isn't your fault. Gabriel planned to kidnap both you and I

Buddy. If I hadn't asked you taking

me that file, you would've been taken as well."

"I'd rather it were both of us. Buddy is only five years old... He must be so scared right now..." Nyla sobbed uncontrollably, tears streaming down her face as her emotions spiraled out of control.

Breaking free from Damon's arms, she turned toward the door. "I'm going to find

Buddy. I can't just sit here I have to do something, or I'll go crazy!"

Damon stepped in front of her, blocking her path. "Nyla, calm down! Right now, the best thing we can do is wait for news. As soon as my team gets a lead, we'll go get Buddy. Trust me, alright?"

Nyla's face was ashen. "How can we trust Gabriel to give Buddy back to us?

Wait... I have his phone number. I'll call him right now..."

She pulled out her phone and dialed Gabriel's number.

After a few rings, the call connected.

"Nyla, I've been waiting for your call." Gabriel's voice came through, smooth and unhurried.

"Gabriel! Where did you take Buddy? Give him back to me!" Nyla shouted, her voice trembling with desperation.

Gabriel chuckled. "Don't worry, Nyla. Buddy is fine. But if you were here with me, it would be even better."

He had initially planned to kidnap both Nyla and Mason, but her unexpected departure had disrupted his plan, leaving him with only half his goal achieved.

Still, it didn't matter. The bigger picture remained intact.

As long as he had Mason, Nyla would come to him.

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"What exactly do you want?!" Nyla demanded.

Hearing the urgency and anger in her voice, Gabriel chuckled. "Nyla, my original plan was to be with you, have a child, and spend the rest of our lives together."

The words filled Nyla with disgust. But with Mason in Gabriel's hands, she dared not provoke him. Who knew what he might do?

Taking a deep breath to steady herself, she said slowly, "Your goal is me. Taking Buddy doesn't help you. Just let him go, please."

"Nyla, that's what I used to think," Gabriel replied. "But after Damon got me thrown in prison and ruined Nyce Tech, I've changed my mind."

Nyla's grip on the phone tightened. "What do you want now?"

"I want Damon to feel the pain I'm going through. Since I can't bankrupt Prospectus Technology, taking Buddy will make him suffer as much as I have."

"No! Don't!" Nyla trembled, a wave of terror washing over her. "Gabriel, I'm begging you. Don't hurt Buddy. Please... Let me trade places with him. Take me as your hostage instead. My life for his. Please? I'm the one you want."

The line went silent, as though Gabriel were weighing her proposal.

Every second of his silence stretched into an eternity for Nyla.

Finally, he spoke. "Fine. But how do I know you're not lying to me?"

"I'll do whatever you want, as long as you promise to let Buddy go," she answered.

"Alright. Wait for my call. And I suggest you and Damon don't call the police. If you do, I can't guarantee what might happen to Buddy." With that, he hung up.

Nyla's eyes were red, her body shaking uncontrollably as she swayed on her feet.

Damon steadied her, his voice calm but firm. "Nyla, I won't agree to you trading places with Buddy. There's no guarantee Gabriel will keep his word. What if he ends up controlling both of you?" en

Damon had stayed quiet during her call with Gabriel, knowing his voice might provoke him.

Gabriel had already resorted to kidnapping Mason, abandoning any pretense of reason. Now, he was a desperate, dangerous man, capable of anything.

Nyla looked up at Damon, her gaze full of despair. "You won't let me trade for Buddy? Then do you have another solution?"

It was the only way she could think of. Even if Gabriel captured her too, as long as she could see Mason and

he was safe, she was willing

to take that risk.

Mason was only five years old. Who knew where he was being kept? Was Gabriel hurting him?

The thought of her son possibly suffering tore at her heart. She wished it were her in his place.

"Nyla, my team is already working on tracking Gabriel's location. As soon as we pinpoint him, we'll rescue Buddy. Trust me, okay?" Damon pleaded.

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Mason had already been taken. If Nyla fell into Gabriel's hands as well, Damon would lose all leverage once Gabriel started threatening him with both of them.

"If your team doesn't find him before he calls, I'm going to do what I said," Nyla replied.

Damon frowned. "Nyla, you need to stay calm—"

"Calm? How can I stay calm? Buddy has been kidnapped! Every second he's with Gabriel, he's in danger! How can I calm down?" Nyla cried.

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Seeing Nyla's agitated state, Damon pulled her into his arms. "I know. I know. I feel the same way. But we can't panic. The more we panic, the more mistakes we'll make. Buddy will be okay. I promise."

Nyla gripped the front of his suit jacket, her tears soaking into his shirt. She tried to stay calm, but the thought of Mason in danger made her tremble with fear.

Damon gently patted her back and spoke softly. "Let's go upstairs. We'll wait for Gabriel's call and any updates from my team."

They went upstairs.

Nyla sat on the couch, her eyes fixed on her phone, anxiously waiting for Gabriel's call.

Damon stood by the window, his face grim, staring out as his thoughts churned. The tension in the room was palpable as the minutes dragged on.

Finally, Nyla's phone rang.

She snatched it up, her breath hitching when she saw Gabriel's name on the screen.

Answering quickly, she asked, "Have you decided? Will you let me trade places with Buddy?"

"I will," Gabriel replied. "But you'll have to come to a location I choose, alone. Buddy will be sent to a different location, and Damon can pick him up there. You must both leave at the same time. If you try anything, you won't get a second chance."

Nyla let out a shaky breath, her sweaty palm gripping the phone tightly. "Okay, I agree."

Gabriel gave her two locations-one in the southern part of the city, the other in the north. Both were about 20 kilometers from Prospectus Technology.

"At 6:00 p.m., you and Damon will each head to the locations I've chosen. If I don't see you there within an hour, you'll never see Buddy again," Gabriel warned before hanging up.

Nyla turned to Damon. "If your team doesn't update by six, we'll do what Gabriel says."

Damon nodded grimly. "Alright."

He called in Spencer and instructed him to deploy men near the two locations. Once Mason was picked up, they would retrieve Nyla immediately.

"Yes, Mr. Sumner. I'll handle it," Spencer assured him.

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Time ticked by as Spencer's team positioned themselves around the designated locations.

Before 5:00 p.m., Damon's phone buzzed with an update.

"Mr. Sumner, we've been tracking Gabriel's phone signal since his call with Ms. Kinsey. We've narrowed his location to a five-kilometer radius near Remscent Street," the team reported. en

Damon's expression grew colder. "Five kilometers near Remscent Street? Do you know how many people live in that area?"

"We're continuing to trace the signal and should have a more precise location soon," the team member replied.

"Find him before 6:00 p.m.," Damon ordered, his tone icy.

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In Unit 502 on the fifth floor of an

apartment building, Gabriel sat on the couch while Mason, tightly bound, lay on the floor. Cent belongs to

Mason leered at Gabriel with fierce, dark eyes, his anger unshaken despite the situation.

It was this bad man again—the one who had locked him up in his company before!

Gabriel stared coldly at the boy's face, so similar to Damon's. "Keep looking at me like that, and I'll gouge your eyes out."

He expected the threat to reduce Mason to tears, but the boy didn't flinch. He kept staring, unyielding.

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Gabriel was initially furious, but as he looked closer, he noticed that Mason's eyes resembled Nyla's. His expression changed slightly, and he averted his gaze, deciding to ignore the boy. After all, Nyla would soon show up willingly.

As for Mason, Gabriel had never planned on letting him go. His original intention had been to abduct both Nyla and Mason and immediately leave the country with them. As long as Mason was in his possession, he could use the boy to threaten Nyla into staying with him.

Although the plan had taken a slight detour, everything was still within his control.

Once his men brought Nyla to him, he could take them abroad. No matter how resourceful Damon was, he couldn't track them down.

Thinking about his future life with Nyla, Gabriel smiled. He didn't notice that the ropes binding Mason's hands were gradually loosening.

While Mason worked diligently to secretly free himself, his smartwatch suddenly began ringing.

The abrupt sound startled Mason and Gabriel.

Gabriel's expression darkened as he strode over to Mason and flipped him over.

When he saw the number displayed on the smartwatch screen, he sneered and yanked it off Mason's wrist, holding it up to his face.

"Who is this?" Gabriel asked.

Mason glanced at the screen. Recognizing the number, he replied, "That's my master."

"Master?" Gabriel's sneer deepened. He smashed the smartwatch onto the floor with a loud crash.

The impact shattered the screen, abruptly silencing the ringtone.

Mason glared at him. "What gives you the right to break my stuff?!"

Gabriel's expression turned cold. "Because you're in my hands now. Let me warn you don't even think about pulling any tricks. Otherwise, you'll never see your mom again."

Though visibly shaken by his words, Mason's eyes reddened. He stubbornly refused to cry.

Gabriel ignored him and returned to the couch, sinking back into his seat. At Saintornia airport...

A tall man wearing sunglasses glanced at his phone, his brows furrowing slightly.

What was going on? This was the first time Mason hadn't answered his call. He tried again, but the line was dead.

The man narrowed his eyes and opened a tracking app on his phone. Checking the smartwatch's location, he noticed something odd.

Had someone stolen it?

The smartwatch, a gift he had given to Mason, appeared ordinary on the surface. But it contained

state-of-the-art technology that allowed for location tracking even if it was powered off.

Closing the app, he sent Mason a text message but received no response.

While he wasn't initially concerned, by the time he checked into his hotel and still hadn't heard back, his intuition told him something was wrong.

This wasn't like Mason. Normally, he would respond within minutes, let alone hours.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, the man dialed another number, his tone cold. "Find out where Buddy is now."

By 6:00 p.m., Damon's team had pinpointed Gabriel's location to Garmony Residence.

However, Garmony Residence was a

sprawling area with thousands of

residents. During rush hour, the

steady flow of people made it

impossible to identify Gabriel's exact location.

"Mr. Sumner, if Ms. Kinsey can get Gabriel on a call and keep him talking for one minute, we can pinpoint the exact building he's in," his subordinate reported.

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Damon replied coolly, "Understood."

He ended the call and discussed the plan with Nyla, ensuring the conversation wouldn't raise Gabriel's suspicions.

Just as Nyla was about to dial, her phone lit up with an incoming call. Seeing Gabriel's name on the screen, she froze for a moment before exchanging a glance with Damon.

Taking a deep breath, she answered. "Hello?"

"Nyla, you should be on your way by now. I've changed my mind. Go to the Sotoz subway station. Damon should head to the Marsh Street subway station. I'll have someone bring Mason to him there," Gabriel instructed.

Sotoz and Marsh Street were in entirely different directions from the original locations he had provided-one to the east, the other to the west.

However, Sotoz was only a few kilometers from Garmony Residence.

"Alright, I understand," Nyla said evenly.

"Don't try anything funny," Gabriel warned. "If you or Damon deviate from the plan, neither of you will ever see Buddy again."

Clenching the phone tightly, Nyla steadied herself before replying, "I understand." Because the call was on speaker, Damon had heard everything.

Nyla turned to him. "I'll have the driver go slower. You move faster. Once you've secured Buddy, I'll figure out how to get back."

With Gabriel changing the locations at the last minute, Damon's original plans were rendered useless. There wasn't enough time to redeploy his men effectively.

"Alright. Be careful," Damon said.

"I will," Nyla replied.

As she turned to get in the car, Damon suddenly pulled her into a hug from behind.

"Nyla, stay safe," he said, his voice heavy with worry.

Nyla's eyes reddened. She didn't know if she would return safely. Ahead of her lay Gabriel's trap.

"Mm. You too," she replied, gently removing his hands.

Without looking back, she opened the car door and got in.

She was afraid that if she turned around, she wouldn't have the strength to leave.

As her car disappeared into the distance, Damon got into his vehicle.

The moment he started the engine, his phone rang.

"Mr. Sumner, we've narrowed it down. Gabriel is in Block 12 of Garmony Residence, likely on one of the lower floors-below the 10th floor. We're conducting a

floor by-floor sweep now," ayer?

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subordinate reported.

"Good. Proceed carefully and ensure Buddy's safety above all else," Damon reminded.

"Understood," the subordinate replied.

Gabriel sat on the couch, impatiently tapping his foot and glancing at the clock, His expression grew

increasingly sour. Contents

Suddenly, Mason spoke. "I need to pee."

Already agitated, Gabriel snapped, "Go in your pants."

"I need to poop, too!" Mason exclaimed.

Gabriel glared at him, his voice icy. "Don't test me. I'm warning you."

"I mean it! I need to go!" Mason protested. "You've kept me tied up for so long-I can't hold it anymore!"

Looking at Mason's distressed face,

seves narrowed

sly. He wondered if t was trying to trick him. Col

boy

Seeing Gabriel's hesitation, Mason defiantly added, "If you won't untie me, I'll just

go right here in my pants."

Gabriel raised an eyebrow and suddenly chuckled. "Fine. Go ahead."

Mason froze momentarily before glaring at Gabriel. No wonder his mother didn't like this fellow. He didn't like him either.

The two stared each other down in tense silence until Gabriel's phone rang. He glanced at the caller ID, squinting slightly before answering.

"Mr. Hackett, the plane is ready to go. You can take off anytime. When will you be here?" a voice on the other end asked.

Gabriel checked the time. "Around 8:00 p.m."

"Got it," the caller replied before hanging up.

Gabriel lowered the phone and turned his gaze back to Mason, his expression unreadable.

He hesitated, debating whether to send the boy away first. It would be safer. As long as Nyla couldn't see Mason, she'd agree to his terms and leave with him.

"I need to pee!" Mason's loud declaration cut through Gabriel's thoughts, his face darkening instantly.

Gabriel growled, "I already told you if you need to pee, just do it in your pants."

Mason crossed his arms, defiant. "Are you scared I'll run away? A grown man, afraid of a little kid running off. You're such a coward!"

Gabriel scoffed. "Scared of you? Don't flatter yourself—I just don't want the hassle!"

"Yeah, right! If you weren't scared, you'd let me go. If I escaped, it'd just prove how useless you are. Can't even keep a kid under control!" Mason taunted.

Mason had already figured out Gabriel's plan.

The man wouldn't hurt him—he was just bait to lure his mother. If his smartwatch hadn't been smashed, he'd have already warned her to stay away.

"You—" Gabriel gnashed his teeth but stopped, remembering they were on the fifth floor. Even if Mason tried to run, he wouldn't get far.

Gabriel scoffed, grabbed Mason

Offed, grabbed Mason

roughly, and yanked him to his feet. see what you're capable of right under my nose."

He dragged Mason to the bathroom and barked, "Go!"

"You tied me up. How am I supposed to do anything?" Mason shot back.

Gabriel weighed his options. He could untie Mason or... help him.

Grimacing at the second thought, he chose the first and untied the boy but kept hold of the rope, his eyes never leaving him.

"Hey! Stop staring at me! I can't go with you watching!" Mason whined.

Gabriel's patience was wearing thin. "Then hold it. I don't have all day."

Seeing Gabriel reaching to tie him up again, Mason quickly blurted, "Wait! I think I can go now."

Gabriel rolled his eyes, visibly annoyed. If he didn't need Mason to force Nyla to stay with him, the boy

would've been gone boy

ago

OUMS

Once Mason was finished, Gabriel tied him up again and dumped him on the

floor.

This time, Mason didn't resist. His sharp eyes darted around, already plotting another escape.

Initially, he'd thought about untying himself and climbing out the bathroom window, but Gabriel had stuck to him like glue, leaving no opportunity. He'd have to come up with something else.

Suddenly, a knock at the door broke the silence.

Gabriel froze, his body tensing.

Without a word, he stuffed a cloth into Mason's mouth to silence him before moving cautiously toward the door.

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The knocking persisted, darkening Gabriel's expression with each sound. It was clear the person outside knew he was inside but refused to leave.

He exhaled deeply and quietly moved Mason to the bedroom before returning to the door. In a low voice, he asked, "Who is it?"

"Hello, I'm here to check the gas lines. Could you open the door, please?" the other party replied.

Gabriel hesitated before saying, "I'm busy today. Come back tomorrow."

"Sir, our inspections are time-sensitive. Last time, you weren't home. It'll only take five minutes," the person explained.

When Gabriel remained silent, the voice pressed on. "Sir? Are you still there?"

"I said come back tomorrow!" Gabriel snapped. "I don't have time today."

Deciding to ignore the persistent visitor, he retreated to the living room and made a call. "Some guy claiming to check the gas is at my door. Get up here now and deal with him!"

The line remained silent for a moment, and Gabriel's instincts flared.

Something was wrong. His tone turned icy. "Who are you?"

The call abruptly disconnected.

Unease settled over him as he tried contacting his men again, but none of them answered.

Growing frustrated, he called his secretary. "Find out what's going on! No one is answering my calls!"

"Yes, Mr. Hackett! Right away!" he replied.

Hanging up, Gabriel paced the room, anxiety building with each step. A chilling thought suddenly struck him, and he bolted toward the bedroom.

He flung the door open, and his face went pale.

The room was empty. The ropes lay discarded on the floor, mocking him.

The window was wide open.

Gabriel stormed toward it, but Mason was gone. His expression twisted with fury. He had underestimated the boy.

Snatching his phone, he barked at his secretary, "Send more men! I want Buddy back immediately!"

Without Mason, Nyla wouldn't agree to anything. Everything he'd planned would crumble.

As he opened the door to leave, a tall man stood in his path. Dressed in a mask and hat, the man exuded a menacing presence.

Gabriel froze, panic creeping into his chest. He tried to slam the door, but the man stopped it effortlessly with one hand.

The man's eyes were icy as he asked, "Where's Buddy?"

Gabriel staggered back, startled. "Who are you?"

"You don't need to know who I am," the man replied. "Tell me where Buddy is, or

you'll never leave this place alive."

Gabriel snorted. "And why should I tell you?"

Before he could react further, the man seized him by the throat. "Mr. Hackett, know all your plans. If you tell me where Buddy is now, I'll let you leave. You have one chance. Miss it, and you won't walk out of here." .

BUMS

Fear washed over Gabriel as he locked eyes with the man. He paled. "Let me go! You'll regret this!" Each word escaped through gritted teeth.

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The man chuckled. "It seems like you don't want to leave here after all."

As soon as he finished speaking, Gabriel felt a sharp pain at the back of his neck. Darkness overtook him, and he collapsed to the floor, unconscious.

The man looked down at him with disdain before stepping over his limp body and heading into the living room.

After scanning the area and finding no sign of Mason, he began searching each room one by one.

Meanwhile, Mason was curled up inside a storage compartment under the bed in the bedroom.

He had initially planned to climb out of the window, but the five-story drop below had sent him scrambling back inside.

While searching the room earlier, he had discovered the cabinet under the bed and squeezed himself in, determined to stay hidden until Gabriel left.

Just as Mason was preparing to sneak out, footsteps echoed from the doorway. He froze, holding his breath in terror and silently begging that Gabriel wouldn't find him.

The footsteps grew louder, stopping just in front of the cabinet where he was hiding.

Mason's heart pounded so hard he thought it might burst out of his chest.

A deep voice broke the silence. "Buddy, come out."

Mason didn't move. He was so tense that he failed to notice the voice didn't match Gabriel's.

The man stared down at the cabinet. When his words drew no reaction, he chuckled and crouched to pull the drawer open.

The moment the drawer slid out, Mason's small fist shot toward the man's face.

The man moved swiftly, leaning back just in time to dodge the punch.

Mason blinked, realizing this wasn't Gabriel.

"Who are you?!" His voice was wary, his wide eyes filled with suspicion.

Although his clenched fists trembled with fear, he put on a brave front, refusing to show weakness.

"Take a guess," the man said lightly.

Mason glared at him silently.

"Alright, come with me," the man said, reaching forward and grabbing Mason's shirt.

"Let me go! Let me go! Where are you taking me, you bad guy?!" Mason shouted, thrashing in his grip.

"You'll find out soon enough," the man replied nonchalantly.

"I'm not going! Let me go!" Mason cried.

"This isn't up for debate." The man effortlessly carried Mason out of the room.

As they passed through the doorway, Mason's gaze landed on Gabriel, lying unconscious on the floor.

"See that?" the man said coolly. "That's what happens when people don't listen. If you act up, you'll end up just like him-knocked out and dragged along."

Mason suppressed a shiver of fear. "If I don't cry or make a fuss, will you let me go?"

"I'll think about it." With that, the man carried Mason into the elevator.

When the doors opened on the ground floor, Mason immediately screamed, "Help! Someone help! He's kidnapping me! He's going to sell me! Save me!"

He kept shouting until he realized there wasn't a single person

the elevator. His cries ab Outside

stopped as he stared at the empty surroundings in shock.

The man glanced at him, amusement dancing in his eyes. "Done yelling? Feel

free to keep going-I could use some background music."

Mason fell silent, his cheeks puffed up in frustration.

The man smirked. "Not yelling anymore? Alright then, let's go."

"Who are you?" Mason demanded. "You'd better let me go now, or my dad will make you pay! He's super strong he could beat up ten guys like you at once. But if you take me home right now, I promise he'll reward you!"

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The man burst into laughter. "Oh, I'm terrified. Go ahead, call him to come and beat me up."

Realizing his threats weren't working, Mason glared at him, glancing around for a chance to escape.

The man left him no opportunity, shoving him into a nearby car and instructing the driver to start the engine.

Mason noticed he wasn't tied up, sparking a glimmer of hope. He turned to the man. "Where are you taking me?"

He silently resolved to find a way to contact his parents and let them know his whereabouts.

"You said it yourself—I'm a kidnapper. I'm going to sell you, of course," the man replied.

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Damon had just arrived at the subway station when his phone buzzed with a call from one of his men.

"Mr. Sumner, we've found Gabriel. He's unconscious at the apartment door, but there's no sign of Mr. Mason," the subordinate reported.

Damon's expression darkened. "Wake Gabriel up and make him tell you where Buddy is."

Ending the call, he turned to his driver. "Stop the car."

As soon as the vehicle pulled over, Damon stepped out. "Go check the subway station to see if Buddy is there. Call me immediately, whether you find him or not."

"Understood, Mr. Sumner," the driver replied.

Damon flagged down a taxi and headed toward Garmony Residence. On the way, he called Nyla, updating her on Gabriel's condition and the lack of news about Mason.

"I'm closer to Garmony Residence," Nyla said immediately. "I'll head there now!" "Alright," Damon replied.

Ten minutes later, Nyla arrived at Garmony Residence.

As she entered the living room, she froze.

Gabriel was tied to a chair, his face bruised and swollen beyond recognition.

Luca approached her quickly. "Ms. Kinsey, Gabriel said a mysterious man took Mr. Mason. We checked the security footage, but someone deleted the segment showing the man entering and leaving. We're working on recovering it now."

Nyla's legs buckled, and Luca guided her to the couch.

"Ms. Kinsey, don't worry too much... Mr. Mason will be fine," he said gently.

Nyla lowered her head, covering her face with her hands as panic clawed at her chest.

She had thought the worst-case

scenario would be staying with

Mason no matter what. But now

Mason was gone, taken by someone she didn't even know.

Taking a deep breath, she looked up at Luca. "Do you have any suspects?"

"None so far. The man seems to

have vanished into thin air. Even the surrounding surveillance didn't catch him," Luca answered.

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Nyla's heart sank. "Keep looking. If we recover the missing footage, we should be

able to figure out who took Buddy."

Her voice broke as she spoke, tears streaming down her face.

"Ms. Kinsey, don't lose hope. Your son will come back safely," Luca reassured her.

Nyla didn't respond, silently wiping her tears as despair settled over her.

Luca watched helplessly, unsure how to comfort her.

By the time Damon arrived, more than an hour had passed.