

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

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Nyla had calmed down by the time Damon arrived. Seeing him, she stood up and said, "Just now, Gabriel said some mysterious person took Buddy away."

Damon turned to Luca, his tone sharp. "Have you found out who it was?"

Luca shook his head. "Not yet, Mr. Sumner. The surveillance footage from the neighborhood entrance during that time has been deleted. We're still working on recovering it."

"How long will it take to recover?" Damon pressed.

"We're not sure yet," Luca admitted.

Damon's expression darkened, and the atmosphere grew tense. "Not sure? What does that mean? If you can't even recover a simple surveillance video, why are you still here?"

Luca swallowed hard. He wasn't an expert in surveillance recovery, but he knew better than to say so.

Bowing his head, he replied, "Yes, Mr. Sumner. I'll push them to work faster."

"Get it done in an hour. And check the surrounding houses. Most people have security cameras these days. Take a team and see if anyone's footage captured the suspect or Buddy," Damon ordered.

Luca nodded hastily. "Understood. I'll get on it right away."

Leaving two men behind to guard Gabriel, he hurried off with the others.

"Mr. Sumner, what should we do with Gabriel?" one of the men asked.

Damon's voice was icy. "Send him to the police station. I don't want him walking free ever again."

If anything happened to Mason, Gabriel would pay-Damon would make sure of it.

"Understood," the man replied.

Two of the men dragged Gabriel out, leaving the living room eerily quiet. Only Damon and Nyla remained.

Damon walked over to Nyla. "Nyla, don't worry too much. Buddy will be fine."

Nyla's eyes, red and swollen from crying, reflected her frustration. "You keep saying that, but look at us now. Not only is Buddy still missing, but he's been taken by some mysterious person! How am I supposed to stay calm?"

The more she thought about it, the more she regretted not being more cautious when she had first noticed the unfamiliar maid.

If she had been more vigilant, Mason might never have been kidnapped by Gabriel or taken by this so-called "mysterious person."

"I'm sorry, Nyla," Damon said quietly.

Nyla turned away, wiping her tears.

After a long pause, she took a deep breath and said, "You don't need to apologize. It's not your fault. I just... lost control of my emotions earlier."

Damon pulled her into his arms. "I'll do everything in my power to find Buddy."

Suddenly, his phone rang.

Seeing Luca's name, he quickly answered. "What's the update?"

"Mr. Sumner, we found a household camera that captured footage of the mysterious person. But the individual was completely covered up, so we can't make out their face," Luca reported.

"Send the footage to Spencer immediately. Tell him to start digging," Damon instructed.

If they could identify even a fragment of the suspect's appearance, other city surveillance could help track them down.

"Understood, sir," Luca replied.

Ending the call, Damon turned to Nyla. "Nyla, we've found evidence of the mysterious person. Now we just need to wait for Spencer's analysis.

we'll know where Buddy was

A flicker of hope appeared in Nyla's eyes. She nodded. "Okay."

Mason's abductor took him to a fancy restaurant.

Once they were seated in a private room, the man handed Mason the menu. "Hungry? Pick something to eat."

Mason glanced around at the luxurious decor, his eyes darting anxiously. "I need to use the restroom."

The man raised an eyebrow and chuckled. "Order first, then you can go."

He figured Mason might not be in the mood to order after being caught later.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Mason put on a sweet, obedient expression. "Okay."

After selecting his food, he handed the menu back. "Can I go now?"

The man nodded. "Go ahead."

Mason quickly headed for the door. As he reached it, he glanced back and saw the man still sitting calmly, making no move to follow him.

Suspicion crept into his mind. Why wasn't the man worried about him escaping?

The man raised an eyebrow. "What's wrong? Not going?"

"N-No, I'm going now," Mason stammered.

Fearing the man might change his mind, Mason bolted out the door and raced down the hallway.

The man smiled, then removed his mask and took a sip of his red wine.

Instead of heading to the restroom, Mason made a beeline for the restaurant's exit. If he could just get outside, he could find a phone and call his parents to come and save him.

Although he didn't believe the strange man would hurt him, he was still afraid.

He ran as fast as his little legs could carry him, and soon the entrance came into view.

Ten meters.

Nine meters.

Eight meters.

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Two meters.

One meter.

Just as he was about to reach the door, two men in black suits appeared out of nowhere, blocking his path.

Before he could even react, they grabbed him and carried him back to the private room.

Mason pouted, regretful. He should've gone to the restroom to escape instead! The man was now sitting with his mask and hat removed.

Mason, stunned, quickly covered his eyes with his hands. "Put your mask back on! I don't want to see your face!"

If he saw the man's face, the man would never let him go. He didn't want to risk being silenced.

The man chuckled at Mason's exaggerated reaction. He looked to be in his early 20s, with features that weren't overly striking but somehow made a lasting impression.

Leaning on the table with one hand, he swirled a glass of red wine with the other. He raised a brow. "Relax I'm not going to hurt you. I just wanted to have a meal with you, that's all. You can stop covering your face now."

Mason shook his head vigorously. "No, no, no! I don't want to see your face! Put your mask back on, and then I'll put my hands down!"

This man could find Gabriel-he could be Gabriel's accomplice.

Mason didn't want to see his face.

The man raised an eyebrow, clearly amused by Mason's wariness.

His smile deepened as he said, "Buddy, we've talked on the phone so many times, and now that we've finally met, you still don't recognize you

me? That's kind of hurtful, you

know."

Mason froze. It took a few seconds before his hands slowly lowered. He had

covered his face, not daring to look at the man when he came back inside.

Now, as he stared at the man for a few moments, his eyes widened in disbelief.

"Master?" he asked.

The man nodded. "That's me."

In an instant, Mason's expression shifted from shock to joy. He jumped off his chair and ran over, his face lighting up with excitement. "Master, when did you get here? Why didn't you tell me?"

"I called you, didn't I? But you didn't answer. Then, when I tried again, your phone was off. I thought you didn't want to see me," the man said.

"No way! I was kidnapped at the time... Master, thank goodness you came to save me! Thank you! You're the best!" Mason cheered.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Seeing Mason's fawning expression, the man couldn't help but chuckle. "Alright, stop sucking up. You didn't recognize me for so long. What's the deal? Has my charm faded, or have you just forgotten all about your master?"

"You were wearing a mask and a hat, and you pulled me straight out of that hiding spot. I was terrified, thinking you were a bad guy. How could I possibly know it was you?" Mason countered.

The man raised an eyebrow. "So this is my fault, huh?"

"Of course not!" Mason switched to full flattery mode, reaching up to massage the man's shoulders with a wide grin. "Master, you're the best-looking, the most amazing! Just next time, don't cover yourself up like that. It was scary-I thought I was being kidnapped!"

"Alright, go sit back down," the man instructed.

Instead of returning to his original seat, Mason slid into the spot right next to the man, looking up at him with wide, admiring eyes. "Master, how did you even know I got kidnapped? And how did you find me and rescue me so quickly? You're incredible! The coolest ever!"

"I put a tracker in that smartwatch I gave you. It gives me your exact location," the man replied.

"Ohhh... but the watch got smashed," Mason complained.

"Even if it's broken, the tracker still works. I'll get you a new one soon," the man reassured him.

Mason nodded eagerly. "Okay, thanks, Master. Oh, by the way... I want to call my mom so she doesn't worry about me."

"No need to rush. Once we're done eating, I'll take you home myself," the man promised.

"Alright then," Mason agreed easily.

Spencer had been tracking the mysterious man from the moment he got off the plane, piecing together his movements.

He immediately called Damon. "Mr. Sumner, we've got a lead. The man who took Mr. Mason is named Alexander Kinsey. He flew into town today and doesn't appear to be connected to Gabriel.

"He's at a high-end restaurant named Luar with Mr. Mason right now."

Damon frowned. Why would someone bring Mason to such a place?

"Got it," he replied, ending the call and turning to Nyla. "We've located Buddy. Let's head over now."

When they arrived at the restaurant, Alexander and Mason had just finished their meal and were stepping outside.

Spotting Damon and Nyla, Mason's eyes lit up with excitement. He ran straight toward them. "Daddy! Mommy! You're here to pick me up?"

Nyla bent down to scoop Mason into a tight embrace, tears streaming down her face.

From the moment Mason had gone.

missing, her heart had been on edge, gripped by the fear of hearing the worst. Now, here he was, safe in her arms.

Sensing his mother's anxiety, Mason wrapped his arms around her. "Don't cry, Mommy. I'm okay."

Nyla took a shaky breath, wiped her tears, and forced a smile as she released him. "I'm so sorry, Buddy. It's Mommy's fault. I promise this will never happen again."

Mason had probably been terrified when Gabriel kidnapped him.

Seeing his mother's red, swollen eyes, Mason felt a pang of sadness. He gently touched her face. "Don't cry, Mommy."

"Alright, I won't. Mommy will listen to you." Despite Nyla's words, her tears kept falling.

Beside them, Damon, now assured of Mason's safety, shifted his icy gaze to Alexander, who stood casually on the restaurant steps.

"Mr. Kinsey, thank you for rescuing my son. But I'd like to know why you didn't contact us right away and instead brought him here for a meal.

"More importantly, how did you even know Buddy had been kidnapped? How did you find him so quickly and get him out of there?" Damon asked.

Chapter 1114

Damon's tone was sharp and probing, his gaze cold and filled with suspicion.

Alexander knew Damon must have already uncovered his basic identity, but not his connection to the Nixons.

He smirked. "Buddy and I share a special bond. I was nearby, and he was hungry, so I brought him here for dinner before taking him home.

"As for how I knew about his kidnapping... I don't believe I owe you an explanation, Mr. Sumner."

With that, Alexander looked at Mason. "Buddy, your parents are here now, so I'll leave you with them. Goodbye."

Mason nodded. "Okay!"

Alexander gave Nyla a fleeting glance before turning and walking away with a smirk.

Damon stared at Alexander's retreating figure, his expression icy.

Only after Alexander drove off did Damon crouch down to Mason's level.

"Buddy, who is this man? How do you know him?"

Mason had always been cautious around strangers. If he'd told Alexander his name, they must have already known each other.

Yet when Damon had investigated Nyla and Mason's lives over the past five years, there had been no mention of someone like Alexander.

Feigning confusion, Mason pouted. "Daddy, what are you talking about? I don't understand."

Damon's brow furrowed, his expression darkening. "Buddy, don't lie to me. If he's dangerous, it could put you in harm's way."

Mason wanted to defend his master but hesitated. Finally, he said, "He saved me today. How could he be dangerous?"

Damon knelt before him to press further, but Nyla interjected, "Buddy, was that man the 'Master' you've mentioned before?"

Mason froze, his expression faltering. He didn't answer.

Taking a deep breath, Nyla softened her tone. "Buddy, how did you meet your master?"

The man had the skills to locate

Mason and extract him from Gabriel.

He wasn't just anyone. And the

money that had mysteriously appeared in Mason's account had come from him.

Mason dropped his gaze, silent. His master had warned him not to tell his parents

about their connection during their earlier meal.

Seeing his reluctance, Nyla didn't push him further.

She turned to Damon and said quietly, "Buddy's been through a lot today. Let's

head home first. We can talk about this another time."

Damon remained silent for a moment before nodding. "Alright."

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Back at the villa, the imposter maid had already been handed over to the police, and Damon had tightened the estate's security measures.

Lydia, who had been drugged unconscious earlier, had regained consciousness.

A doctor examined both her and Mason and confirmed they were fine-Mason was just a bit shaken and needed rest.

Relieved, Damon and Nyla allowed Lydia to take Mason upstairs for a bath.

As Mason and Lydia disappeared up the staircase Damon turned to Nyla, his voice low and serious. "What do you think of Buddy's so-called

master? Could he be dangerous not

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can't shake the feeling that he has some ulterior motive for approaching Buddy."

No normal person would take a random five-year-old as an apprentice, let alone

give him so much money.

Nyla pressed her lips together, nodding.agree. But right now, Buddy trusts him completely and clearly doesn't want to tell us the truth. We'll have to tread carefully."

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Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Damon nodded. "Mm. I've already instructed Spencer to investigate Alexander's background. He landed this morning, barely spent any time at his hotel, and went directly to Gabriel's location.

"Not only that, but he somehow pinpointed exactly where Gabriel was keeping Buddy. I'm worried he might have ulterior motives for involving himself with Buddy."

Nyla shared the same unease.

Back in Capitarnia, Mason had never mentioned Alexander.

Now, this man had suddenly appeared, and something about it didn't sit right. She couldn't shake the feeling that something bigger was at play.

"I'll keep a close eye on Buddy in the meantime," Nyla reassured him. "I won't let him have any further contact with that man. You focus on your work."

Damon nodded. "Alright. Nyla, I know this is hard on you."

Nyla shook her head gently. "The most important thing to me now is that the three of us stay together as a family. Everything else is secondary."

"Mm." Damon hugged her briefly before heading to his study to resume work. Once in his study, he dialed Spencer. "What's the progress on Alexander?"

"Mr. Sumner, I haven't been able to dig up anything about him in Meristate... It's as if he appeared out of thin air," Spencer informed.

"Keep digging. And if there's anything from Falcon, let me know immediately," Damon requested.

"Yes, Mr. Sumner," Spencer replied.

After ending the call, Damon set his phone down, his mind racing.

Alexander had come from Meristate, and the money deposited into Mason's account had been traced back to Alexander.

What's more, that money had originated from within the Nixons. If Alexander was indeed connected to the Nixons, it would explain why Spencer couldn't find anything.

This realization made Damon pick up the phone to call Spencer again. His tone was cold. "Schedule a meeting with Alexander for tomorrow."

The following morning at 8:00 a.m., Damon met Alexander at a café.

Alexander smiled faintly. "Mr. Sumner, to what do I owe the pleasure?"

Damon's gaze was ice-cold. "Why are you involving yourself with my son? What exactly are you after?"

Alexander raised an eyebrow. "I'm not 'after' anything. I just think Buddy is a delightful child. That's all."

The tension between them thickened, the air growing heavy with silence.

After a while, Damon broke it.

"Alexander, don't like beating

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around the bush. You're the one who deposited money into Buddy's account, aren't you? Why would you transfer such a large amount to a child, someone you barely know?"

Unfazed, Alexander's expression remained calm. "That money was rightfully his.

He earned it. I was simply paying him what he was owed."

Damon's voice turned sharper. "And what could a five-year-old possibly do to earn that kind of money?"

Alexander chuckled, meeting

Damon's steely gaze. "That's

Buddy's private matter. If he wants

to share it with you, that's up to him.

But I'm not going to say anything on his behalf. If you're really curious, ask Buddy yourself."

Damon's gaze hardened. "Alexander, Buddy is just a child. He can't yet tell right from wrong. If you're trying to manipulate or exploit him, I won't stand by and let it happen."

Alexander smiled. "Mr. Sumner, rest

assured, care about Buddy. I'd

never hurt him. As for the money, it

was something he earned himself. Whether you believe that or not is up to you."

"Let's hope you're telling the truth," Damon said coldly before getting up and leaving.

As soon as he got into his car, Spencer reported, "Mr. Sumner, Gabriel has confessed everything. He planned to kidnap both Mr. Mason and Ms. Kinsey and abduct them abroad.

"When Ms. Kinsey came to deliver documents to you that day, he seized the chance to take Mr. Mason first. He was going to use him to lure her in."

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

It was unexpected that Gabriel's plan would fail.

"Additionally, his secretary has been detained by the police. It looks like they'll both be facing jail time," Spencer reported.

Damon's expression remained icy. "Understood. Make sure he doesn't have any chance of getting out."

"Yes, Mr. Sumner," Spencer replied.

Just as Spencer was about to leave, the door to Damon's office swung open.

Pedro walked in, his face clouded with anger. "Mr. Sumner, it's been a while."

Damon raised an eyebrow and offered a polite smile. "Mr. Wilkie, it has indeed. What brings you here today?"

Pedro let out a cold laugh. "I heard that my useless granddaughter sold 10% of the Wilkie Group's shares to you for a mere 7,000,000 dollars without even knowing their actual value. I'm here about that."

"Mr. Wilkie, please take a seat. We can discuss this," Damon said, gesturing toward the chair opposite him.

Pedro sat down, his tone stern. "Mr. Sumner, I don't plan to take advantage of you. My granddaughter sold the shares to you for 7,000,000 dollars, so I'm offering you another 1,000,000 dollars to buy them back for 8,000,000 dollars. What do you think?"

A quick turnaround like this—just two days—and Damon could pocket a free 1,000,000 dollars. If he had any sense, he'd agree to such a deal.

Damon narrowed his eyes and glanced at Spencer. "Go make some coffee for Mr. Wilkie—the top-quality one."

Spencer nodded and quietly left the office.

Once the door closed, Damon looked at Pedro and spoke calmly. "Mr. Wilkie, the price was agreed upon at the time. The transaction has been finalized. It wouldn't be appropriate to undo it now, don't you think?"

Pedro's expression darkened. "Mr.

Sumner, everyone knows that 7,000,000 dollars is nowhere near the value of 10% of the Wilkie Group. You deliberately undercut her. My granddaughter might be naïve, but you took advantage of her ignorance."

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"Mr. Wilkie, I think you're being unfair here. Ms. Wilkie willingly sold me the shares for that price, which means she found the offer acceptable. Rather than blaming me, perhaps you should reflect on why she chose to sell them to me instead of to her own family," Damon countered.

"You!" Pedro slammed a hand on the desk, his face livid. "Don't push it!"

"Mr. Wilkie, MS Wilkie already sold

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the shares to me. If you want to buy them back, we can discuss the market price. If you're unwilling to do so, then I'll remain a shareholder of the Wilkie Group," Damon said calmly.

"Rest assured. Now that I'm a shareholder, I'll fulfill the responsibilities that come with the position," Damon added.

Pedro nearly choked on his anger.

Responsibilities as a shareholder? It was obvious Damon intended to seize a bigger piece of the Wilkie Group-or even swallow the entire company.

Regret surged through Pedro. If he had known Jane was going to sell the shares for just 7,000,000 dollars, he would have bought them from her himself.

"Mr. Sumner, let's cut to the chase. What will it take for you to give those shares back?" he asked.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Damon chuckled. "As I said, you can buy them back at market value."

Pedro's expression darkened. "Mr. Sumner, don't joke with me. You are well aware that the Wilkie Group doesn't have that kind of money right now. Name another condition-anything the Wilkie Group can do, and I'll agree to it!"

For Pedro, saying this pushed his limits. If it weren't to eliminate future risks for Theo, he would never lower himself to negotiate like this with Damon.

Damon looked at him, his tone calm but unyielding. "Mr. Wilkie, I'm not joking. I'm a businessman. I make deals to earn money. If there's no profit, why would I spend 7,000,000 dollars to buy the Wilkie Group shares from Ms. Wilkie? For fun?"

"I've already offered 8,000,000 dollars to buy back the shares. It's only been a few days, and you'd be making an easy 1,000,000 dollars. Isn't that a profit?" Pedro countered.

"Mr. Wilkie, do you take me for a fool? Even if I don't sell the shares back to you, I could sell them to anyone else for ten times that profit or more. Why would I sell them to you?" Damon retorted.

Pedro's eyes widened with rage. "Damon, do you insist on making an enemy of the Wilkies?"

Damon said calmly, "Mr. Wilkie, if you were in my shoes and owned 10% of Prospectus Technology's shares, would you sell them to me for 8,000,000 dollars?"

Pedro's face darkened. "That's a completely different situation! Don't conflate the two."

"In my view, it's exactly the same. If you want the shares, come back with a sincere offer. One million dollars more? Are you trying to shoo away a beggar?" Damon replied.

Pedro's face flushed. Trembling, he abruptly stood, almost losing his balance. He struck the floor with his cane, his voice shaking with indignation. "Young man, don't let your arrogance get the best of you. It will only bring you harm!"

Unfazed, Damon replied, "I have work to do, Mr. Wilkie. I won't see you out. Take care."

Pedro's breath came faster, his anger boiling over. If he stayed a moment longer, he feared he might collapse from his boiling emotions. He turned and stormed out.

After a moment, Spencer returned to the office with coffee. "Mr. Sumner, where's Mr. Wilkie?"

"He left," Damon answered.

"What about this coffee?" Spencer asked.

"Just leave it on the desk," Damon instructed.

Spencer placed the cup on the desk and left the office.

Nyla was sitting with Mason, helping him draw, when Lydia approached. "Ms. Kinsey, there's a woman in her

40s at the door claiming to be your elder. She wants to see you.

Nyla frowned. "I'll go take a look."

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She stood and headed toward the door, noticing Lydia intended to follow.

Turning back, she said, "You don't need to come. Stay in the living room and watch Buddy."

"Alright," Lydia answered.

At the door, Nyla checked the video intercom and saw Wren standing outside.

Pressing her lips together, she opened the door. "Ms. Hackett, why are you here?"

Wren rushed forward as soon as the

door opened. "Nyla, I came to beg

you. Please forgive Gabriel. I know

he's done a lot of wrong, but it's only because he loves you so much...

"Could you write a letter of forgiveness for the court? If you're willing to forgive

him, he'll get a lighter sentence."

Nyla stared at her coldly, her face

devoid of warmth. "Ms. Hackett, he's

in this situation because of his

actions. I won't write a letter of forgiveness."

She thought back to the hours when Gabriel had kidnapped Mason.

The despair and agony she'd felt were seared into her heart. She could never

forgive Gabriel or give him a chance to hurt her or Mason again.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Wren froze in disbelief. "Nyla, are you really this heartless? Even though your father and I divorced, you and Gabriel were siblings for years. Can you really stand to see his life destroyed?"

Taking a deep breath, Nyla locked eyes with her. "His life is ruined because he chose the wrong path. That has nothing to do with me. Please leave. Don't come back I won't see you again."

With that, she shut the door and walked back to the living room.

Outside, Wren stared at the closed door, her face pale and her expression increasingly desperate.

Her phone buzzed in her bag.

When she answered, an impatient voice barked through the line. "Wren, where

are you? Get to the courthouse now and finalize the divorce!"

Before she could respond, the caller hung up.

Still holding the phone, Wren stood there, dazed.

Why... Why had her life-and Gabriel's fallen apart so suddenly?

Tom snorted when he heard about Gabriel's arrest. "Idiot!"

If Gabriel hadn't foolishly tried to abduct Nyla and Mason to flee abroad, he wouldn't have ended up in prison. It served him right.

The downside was that with Gabriel in prison, Nyce Tech would soon collapse, leaving Tom without a pawn. He needed to expedite finding a backup plan.

Upon thinking of Drake's ruthlessness, Tom's expression darkened.

After some contemplation, he made up his mind, took a deep breath, and instructed his butler to prepare the car.

An hour later, he entered Damon's office at Prospectus Technology.

"Mr. Sumner, good to see you," Tom greeted.

Damon looked at him coldly. "What do you want?"

Unbothered by Damon's attitude, Tom smiled and sat down across from him. "I'm here to propose a deal."

Damon leaned back, setting aside the file he was reviewing, and gave Tom an amused look. "What kind of deal?"

"I can tell you everything I know about Drake, but in return, you have to help me deal with him," Tom offered.

He was done being at Drake's mercy. Despite all he had done for him, Drake continued to exploit him. If that were the case, his only option would be to ally with Damon

Damon's gaze hardened. "That depends on whether what you have to say is useful to me."

Over an hour later, Tom left Damon's office. "Mr. Sumner, I trust you'll keep your word."

"Don't worry. As long as you don't pull any tricks behind my back, I won't go after the Genge Group And if Drake targets you, I'll help," Damon stated.

"Good. With your assurance, I'm relieved," Tom replied.

Feeling as though a weight had been lifted, Tom returned home, his spirits light.

Now, all he needed to do was figure

out how to win back Valarie. As for Drake and his schemes, they

Were

no longer his concern.

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As soon as Tom stepped into the living room, his good mood faltered. Something felt off.

His expression changed, and he turned to leave, but two men in black stood at the door, blocking his way.

The man standing by the window turned around slowly with a faint smile. "Tom, where have you been? I've been waiting for you."

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Tom's face paled as he instinctively stepped back two paces. "M-Mr. Mummery, why are you..."

Drake chuckled. "You mean, why am I here?"

Tom didn't respond, but the slight tremble in his body betrayed his fear.

"Why I'm here isn't important," Drake said, strolling from the window to the sofa and taking a seat.

His demeanor remained calm, yet his presence exuded a chilling menace. "What matters is this-what exactly did you and Damon discuss earlier?"

He gestured to the seat across from him. "Relax, Tom. Sit."

The casual tone did little to calm Tom, who swallowed nervously before seating himself opposite Drake.

"It was nothing much," he stammered. "I... I was discussing a potential partnership with Prospectus Technology. Once I gain their trust, I'll find a way to bring them down."

"Really?" Drake's sharp eyes locked onto Tom's, a faint smile playing on his lips.

"Yes," Tom nodded quickly. "By the way, Mr. Mummery, what brings you back to the country? Something important?"

"Oh, nothing special. Just came to check on the tasks I assigned you. See how you've been handling them," Drake replied evenly.

"Mr. Mummery, Prospectus Technology was on the brink of bankruptcy not long ago... but they managed to secure significant investment somehow," Tom lamented.

"They're back on their feet now. It's nearly impossible for the Genge Group alone to take them down-"

Drake interrupted, his voice sharp. "Tom, haven't I invested enough in you? Since you returned to the country, you've accomplished nothing.

"The one who almost brought Prospectus Technology to its knees was Gabriel from Nyce Tech, not you. You've been sitting idly while others acted."

He leaned forward, his expression darkening. "If you're unwilling to proceed, I won't force you. But hand over the Genge Group to me."

"What?!" Tom's face turned ashen.

Without the Genge Group, he'd have nothing.

Drake smirked at Tom's reaction. "What's wrong? You're not willing?"

Drake stood, looming over Tom, his gaze icy. "If you want to keep the Genge Group, then do as I say. And as for whatever you told Damon

earlier don't bother explaining Anything you could've said is

insignificant to me. Consider this a

warning-make your choice wisely."

"Mr. Mummery, I don't understand what you're implying..." Tom protested, his voice unsteady.

"I despise fools who think they're clever. I've overestimated you, it seems." Drake's tone dripped with contempt. "You have three days to decide whose side you're on. If you can't you and the Genge Group can rot together."

Without another word, Drake turned and walked out.

As they exited Tom's mansion, Drake's subordinate asked, "Where to next?"

"We're visiting Mr. Kinsey," Drake replied.

He wouldn't be able to keep his return to the country a secret from Alexander for long. Showing sincerity now would ease what he planned to do later.

Half an hour later...

"Mr. Kinsey, I heard you've also returned to the country, so I wanted to stop by and say hello," Drake said with an ingratiating tone as he stood near Alexander, who was seated in the hotel lobby.

Drake needed to curry favor with the Kinseys.

Edward Nixon, the head of the Nixons, was gravely ill. Whoever gained Alexander's support would have a significant advantage in taking control of the Nixon family.

Alexander barely glanced at him. "Mr. Mummery, your sudden return must mean there's something pressing."

Drake's smile stiffened, but he sidestepped the question. "Just some business adjustments. We're planning to open a local branch next year, so I'm here for market research."

Chapter 1120

"In that case, do your research properly. Don't stir up trouble-unless you're prepared to deal with the fallout," Alexander warned.

Drake's eyes searched Alexander's face for meaning. "What do you mean by that? I'm not sure I understand."

Alexander closed his laptop and stood. "If you don't understand, then think it over."

Without another glance, he walked away.

Drake stood there, his expression darkening.

As Alexander's figure disappeared, Drake's thoughts churned. The warning was unmistakable.

Could Alexander know about the things he had done? But how?

He had only just returned to Saintornia and hadn't even begun to target Prospectus Technology or meet with Nyla.

Shaking off the doubts, he resolved: No matter what, he'd see this through. Not even Alexander could stop him.

After Drake left, Tom tried to stand but found his legs trembling. His fear of Drake hadn't diminished in the slightest.

Drake's warning echoed ominously in Tom's mind. It was clear Drake knew he had disclosed information to Damon.

Now Tom was trapped in an agonizing dilemma-continue his cooperation with Damon or remain under Drake's control as his puppet.

In truth, if given the choice, he'd choose neither.

Damon returned home, stepping into the living room to find Mason napping on the sofa. Nearby, Nyla was leaning against it, sound asleep. His gaze softened instantly.

However, as he recalled Tom's revelations from earlier, his mood grew heavier.

He quietly approached Nyla,

scooping her up into his arms. Just as he was carrying her up the stairs, she stirred, her eyes flopen.

Seeing his face so close, she

ace so close, she blinked

in confusion before fully we linked

back already?"

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"Just got home. I was going to carry you upstairs, but I woke you," Damon replied.

Nyla smiled. "Put me down. I'll head up and wash my face."

Instead, Damon tightened his hold and continued up the stairs.

Startled, Nyla looped her arms around his neck. "What are you doing? Put me down!"

Damon answered simply, "I'm carrying you upstairs."

"No. What if Lydia sees us? This is so embarrassing!" Nyla protested, her tone rising.

As if on cue, Lydia's voice echoed from the living room. "Ms. Kinsey my old eyes must be playing tricks

on me. I didn't see anything. Carry on

Nyla's face turned bright red, resembling a ripe tomato.

Damon chuckled, quickening his steps.

"Damon!" she hissed, her voice a mix of annoyance and mortification.

"Don't worry. We're almost there," Damon soothed.

Nyla glared at him, but he silenced her with a quick peck on the lips.

"Alright, alright, I won't tease you again. Forgive me?" he asked as they reached the bedroom.

She hopped out of his arms and huffed. "Apology not accepted!"

Before she could say more, a dazzling diamond necklace appeared before her eyes.