

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

C 1191

Nyla looked appalled as she quickly asked, "Which hospital?"

After receiving the details, she hung up and turned to Damon. "My dad suddenly collapsed and was rushed to the hospital. I need to go see him."

"I'll go with you," Damon said.

"No, you stay here with Buddy. Keep playing and enjoying the trip. I'll go check on him first. If it's not serious, I'll return," Nyla refused.

"Dad isn't feeling well. Buddy and I would just be worrying here anyway. We'll go with you," Damon insisted.

Meeting Damon's serious gaze, Nyla hesitated for a moment before nodding. "Alright."

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They rushed to the hospital, arriving over an hour later.

As soon as they reached the hospital room, the housekeeper quickly approached. "Ms. Kinsey, Mr. Jayston hasn't woken up yet."

Nyla frowned. "What happened? Why did he suddenly collapse?"

The housekeeper shook her head. "I don't know. This morning, a well-dressed middle-aged woman came to visit him. Mr. Jayston sent me out to buy groceries. When I got back, she was just leaving, and shortly after, he collapsed."

Nyla's expression darkened. She immediately pulled out her phone and checked the surveillance footage from Harrison's house.

She fast-forwarded to the time the housekeeper had mentioned and saw that the visitor was Emerald. Her brow furrowed.

The housekeeper glanced at the screen and quickly confirmed, "Yes, that's the woman. They seemed to be arguing. When I returned, Mr. Jayston's face was red with anger."

Putting away her phone, Nyla turned to the housekeeper. "I see. What did the doctor say? Does my dad need to stay in the hospital?"

"Yes, the doctor recommended he stay for three days for further tests to ensure everything is alright," the housekeeper replied.

"Okay. Go home and pack some clothes for him," Nyla instructed.

"Understood, Ms. Kinsey," the housekeeper replied.

Once the housekeeper left, Nyla pushed open the hospital room door and stepped inside.

Harrison was still unconscious, an oxygen mask over his face. The soft rise and fall of the mask was the only indication of his breathing.

Damon stood beside her, his voice gentle. "Nyla, don't worry too much. Dad will be okay."

"Mm. You should take Buddy home. I'll stay and watch over him," Nyla replied. Looking at her pale face, Damon shook his head. "I'll stay. You and Buddy head back home and get some rest. I'll call you when Dad wakes up."

Nyla refused. "No, I'd feel better staying here. It's not good for Buddy to be in a hospital too long. You should take him home."

Seeing her insistence, Damon relented. "Alright. I'll take Buddy home and come right back."

"Okay," Nyla said.

After Damon and Mason left, Nyla glanced at Harrison before stepping out of the room and dialing Alexander's number.

It rang a few times before he answered.

"Nyla, what's wrong? Did you receive the plane ticket I sent?" he asked.

Nyla's voice was cold. "Is she with you right now? I need to speak to her."

Sensing something was off, Alexander paused before replying, "Aunt Emerald and I aren't staying in the same hotel. Why? Did something happen?"

"She and my dad have been divorced for years. They have nothing to do with each other anymore. So why did she go find him, make him so angry that he collapsed, and now he's lying unconscious in a hospital bed?!" Nyla questioned.

Alexander tried to defuse the tension. "Nyla, maybe there's a misunderstanding.

My aunt isn't that kind of person."

"Do you need me to send you the surveillance footage so you can confirm it yourself?" Nyla retorted.

Alexander fell silent for a moment

before sighing. "Nyla, let me ask her first. I call you back later. Also... which hospital is your father in? I'd

like to visit him."

Chapter 1192

"There's no need. My dad has no connection to the Kinseys anymore. Tell her to stay out of his life," Nyla said, hanging up.

On the other end, Alexander immediately dialed Emerald.

"What is it?" Her tone was cold and impatient.

"Aunt Emerald, did you go see Nyla's father?" Alexander asked.

"How did you know?" Emerald shot back.

"Nyla just called me. She said her father collapsed after seeing you and is still unconscious in the hospital," Alexander explained.

There was a brief silence before Emerald's voice returned, laced with sarcasm. "All I did was tell him I was taking Nyla to Meristate and bring up some past matters. If that was enough to make him collapse, then his mental fortitude is laughably weak."

Alexander sighed. "Aunt Emerald, you and her father have been divorced for so long. There's no reason to see him anymore. If something serious happens because of this, Nyla will definitely resent you."

He added, "Don't forget, she's lived with her father all these years. Her bond with him is much deeper than whatever she has with you."

Emerald scoffed. "Whether she resents me or not is none of my concern. I have no intention of catering to her."

"But you said you wanted to improve your relationship with her before you came here," Alexander retorted.

There was a long pause before Emerald finally spoke, her tone softening. "I got it. Don't worry. I won't see Harrison again."

With that, she hung up.

Alexander hesitated for a moment before calling his assistant to find out which hospital Harrison was in.

Shortly after, his assistant sent him the hospital's name and the specific ward Harrison was located in.

As Alexander stood up to change and visit Harrison, a thought struck him.

He paused, then called his assistant again. "Send some health supplements to Mr. Jayston's hospital ward for me."

"Yes, Mr. Kinsey," the assistant replied.

After ending the call, Alexander sat back down at his desk to resume working.

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Over an hour later, Harrison finally regained consciousness in the hospital.

As soon as his eyes fluttered open, Nyla rushed to call the doctor.

After a quick examination, the doctor confirmed that his condition was stable, and Nyla let out a relieved sigh.

"Dad, how do you feel? If anything hurts, let me know so I can tell the doctor," she said.

Harrison weakly shook his head and reached out a trembling hand toward her.

She quickly grasped his hand. "Dad, what is it?"

"Don't... Don't go to Meristate..." His voice was faint, but Nyla heard him clearly.

She lowered her gaze, speaking softly, "Dad, I already promised Mom I'd go. My flight's in a couple of days.

Please don't worry. Just focus on getting better."

Harrison shook his head again, his voice growing urgent yet weak. "Don't go... She's lying to you..."

Emerald had no intention of letting

Nyla inherit the Nixon family power. She had her own family now-her own children. To her, Nyla was nothing more than a tool to be used.

The Emerald he had once loved-the woman who had been willing to endure hardship by his side-was long gone.

Nyla tightened her grip on Harrison's hand. "Dad, don't worry. I know what I'm doing. Get some rest. I'll make you some porridge later."

Upon seeing she wouldn't listen,

tears welled in Harrison's eyes as he stared at her. "Nyla... if you go to Meristate... you'll only be walking into a trap..."

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Nyla pressed her lips together. "Dad, don't worry. Since I've chosen to go to Meristate, I've already prepared myself to face whatever comes my way. You don't need to worry about me."

Harrison wanted to say more, but just then, the hospital room door opened. The housekeeper entered with a bag of clean clothes for him.

"Ms. Kinsey, has Mr. Jayston woken up?" she asked.

Nyla nodded. "Yes, he's awake. The doctor just came by and said there's nothing serious for now. They'll continue monitoring him over the next few days."

"Alright, Ms. Kinsey. If you have things to take care of, you can go ahead. I'll stay here and call you if anything comes up," the housekeeper offered.

Since there wasn't much for Nyla to do at the hospital, she nodded and stood up. "Alright. If anything happens, call me immediately. If it gets too difficult for you to manage alone, I'll hire a couple of nurses to help."

The housekeeper quickly waved her hands. "No need, no need. I can handle it on my own."

"Okay." Nyla turned to Harrison and spoke softly. "Dad, I'm going home to cook some soup for you. I'll bring it over in the afternoon. As for going to Meristate, it's my decision. You don't have to worry. Just focus on resting and getting better."

Harrison was silent for a while before sighing. "You have your own thoughts, and I can't control you anymore... Do whatever you want."

Without responding, Nyla turned and left.

As soon as she walked out of the hospital, her phone rang-it was Damon.

"Nyla, I just dropped Buddy off at home. I'm heading to the hospital now," he informed.

"No need, my dad's already awake. I'm heading back now," Nyla replied.

"I'll come pick you up," he offered.

"I'll just take a cab. It's faster," she said and called for one.

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Nyla arrived home a little after noon.

As she stepped into the living room, she saw Damon sitting on the couch, talking on the phone.

Mason was on the carpet nearby, playing with building blocks.

Seeing her, Damon lowered his voice and said into the phone, "Let's leave it at that for now. I'll contact you later."

After hanging up, he got up and took the bag from her hands. "How's Dad?"

"The doctor said aid he fainted because

he was overly emotional and stressed. There's nothing seriously wrong, but they'll monitor him for a few days. If all goes well, he'll be discharged in two days," Nyla answered.

"Alright. Let's eat first. You didn't even have breakfast this morning," Damon said. "Okay."

After lunch, Nyla went to the kitchen to cook.

Damon walked up behind her, wrapping his arms around her waist and sighing.

"I just wanted to spend these three days peacefully with you and Buddy, but why do so many things keep happening? When will we finally get to live a quiet life without

swnøvetage

interruptions?" he murmurevel

Hearing the sadness in his voice,, Nyla gave a small, bitter smile. "Probably when our son grows up and takes over your company. Then we can finally have time to ourselves."

"Fine..." Damon relented.

Realistically speaking, that would take another 20 or 30 years.

She turned to him. "Alright, don't you have work to do? Now that we're back, you should take care of it."

"Okay. Just let me know when you head to the hospital later, and I'll go with you," Damon reminded.

"Alright," Nyla answered.

An hour later, Nyla packed the freshly cooked soup into a container and walked to the study.

She knocked on the door and pushed it open, about to step inside when she saw Damon asleep at his desk.

She stopped in her tracks, her heart aching at the sight.

Lately, he had been overwhelmed with work and hadn't been getting enough rest. His body was probably already at its limit.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Damon hadn't mentioned it because he didn't want Nyla to worry.

After a brief hesitation, she quietly closed the door and left, careful not to wake him.

Lydia saw her leaving alone with the container and quickly asked, "Ms. Kin- Mrs. Sumner, isn't Mr. Sumner going with you?"

Nyla turned to her and nodded. "He fell asleep. He hasn't had proper rest in a long time. Let him sleep. Don't disturb him."

"Understood. Should I arrange a driver for you?" Lydia asked.

"No need. I'll drive myself." Nyla turned and left.

She arrived at the hospital and carried the soup to the inpatient ward.

As she approached the hospital room, voices reached her from inside.

She pushed the door open and saw a young man, likely in his 20s, dressed in a suit. He was standing beside the bed, holding a bag of supplements and attempting to hand them to the housekeeper, who was refusing to accept them.

On the hospital bed, Harrison frowned and instructed the housekeeper to send the man away, refusing the gift.

Upon hearing the door open, everyone turned to look at her.

The housekeeper hurried over. "Ms. Kinsey, this gentleman says he was sent by Mr. Alexander Kinsey to deliver some supplements for Mr. Jayston, but he refuses to accept them. He's telling me to make him leave, but this gentleman says he won't be able to explain himself if he returns with the supplements..."

Nyla, unsure how to handle the situation, nodded and said, "I'll take care of it."

She handed the soup container to the housekeeper and turned to the man in the suit. "You were sent by Alexander, right? Bring the supplements with you and step outside for a moment."

The man followed her into the hallway.

Once they were outside, Nyla said, "Take these back and tell Alexander that I don't need his fake concern. What want is for the Kinseys and the Nixons to stop bothering my father."

"Understood, Ms. Kinsey. I'll inform Mr. Kinsey," the young man replied.

After sending him away, Nyla returned to the hospital room.

Harrison's condition appeared to have improved his oxygen mask had been removed.

The housekeeper had already poured some soup into a bowl and handed it to him.

Sitting by the bedside, Nyla said, "Dad, I'll talk to the Kinseys and make sure they don't bother you anymore."

Harrison sighed. "Nyla, it doesn't
matter whether the Kinseys come to
me or not. What matters is that
want you to seriously reconsider
going to Meristate.

"Your mother already has a son and a daughter there. Do you really think she'll hand her company over to you?"

He had seen too much in his lifetime. Emerald claiming she wanted to give the company to Nyla was likely a lie-what she truly wanted was to use her.

Once Nyla went abroad, she'd have no support. She'd be at Emerald's mercy.

"Dad, that's between me and her. You don't have to worry. Just focus on recovering," Nyla reassured him.

"It's... It's my fault. If my pharmaceutical company hadn't gone bankrupt back then, you wouldn't have had to—" Harrison began, blaming himself.

She interrupted him, "Dad, that was years ago. Let's not talk about it anymore. Just focus on eating your soup before it gets cold."

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

A trace of guilt flickered in Harrison's eyes. He didn't say anything further and lowered his head to drink the soup.

Only after finishing did Nyla stand up. "Dad, I have something to take care of this afternoon, so I won't stay with you. If anything comes up, just give me a call."

Harrison nodded. "Alright, go ahead."

Once outside the hospital, Nyla got into her car but didn't start it right away. Instead, she flipped through the list of rewards Mason had requested, categorizing them before finally starting the engine and heading straight for the mall.

In addition to the gifts Mason had asked for, she also bought him birthday presents for every year up until he turned 20.

After carefully selecting and packaging everything, she arranged for the items to be delivered to the villa after 9:00 p.m., when Mason would likely be asleep.

By the time she finished and headed home, it was already past 6:00 p.m.

Winter nights fell quickly, and by the time she parked in front of the villa, the sky had completely darkened.

The moment Nyla stepped into the living room, Mason rushed into her arms. "Mommy! You took so long visiting Grandpa. I've been waiting forever!"

She stroked his head with a smile. "Alright, I got it. Tomorrow, when I go visit Grandpa again, I'll bring you along. How does that sound?"

"Okay!" Mason chirped.

After coaxing Mason, Nyla glanced around the living room but didn't see Damon. Turning to Lydia, she asked, "Where's Damon?"

"Mr. Sumner is still in the study handling work. He said he'd wait for you to come back before eating dinner," Lydia informed her.

Nyla nodded. "Alright, I'll go get him."

Just as she was about to knock on the study door, she heard Damon's cold voice from inside.

"For the companies willing to cooperate, have someone handle the contracts. As for those who refuse, find a way to acquire them," he ordered. "I want results in three days. Do what I said."

Nyla pursed her lips before knocking on the door.

"Come in," Damon called out.

She pushed the door open and saw Damon sitting behind his desk, his expression cold and serious. She quickly walked over. "Damon, is something wrong with the company?"

The moment he saw her, his icy demeanor softened.

Looking up at her, he asked, "It's nothing. Why did you come home so late today?"

"I went to buy gifts for Buddy. I asked them to package everything, and they'll be delivered after 9:00 p.m. tonight," she answered.

A flicker of something passed through Damon's eyes before he nodded. "Alright. Have them put everything in the room on the third floor."

"Mm," Nyla hummed in response, then asked, "Are you almost done with your work? If you are, let's eat."

"Alright." Damon stood up and walked out of the study with her.

After dinner, Mason played for a while before Nyla took him upstairs for a bath.

When he realized she planned to help him, he looked embarrassed. "Mommy, boys and girls are different! Besides, I can do it myself."

Seeing his awkward expression, Nyla couldn't help but laugh. "Alright, you can do it yourself. I'll get your pajamas ready. I'll sleep with you tonight. How about that?"

A gleam of joy flashed in Mason's eyes, but he quickly tried to act reserved. "Well... okay, I guess.

Bill Daddy be okay with it?"

belongs to

"He'll be fine," Nyla reassured him.

Of course, Damon wasn't fine.

When he heard that Nyla was going to sleep with Mason, his face clearly showed his displeasure.

"We barely get any time together as it is, and now you're going to sleep with Buddy?" he protested.

She sighed. "How about... we all sleep together?"

Damon gave in. "Fine..."

Not that he had much choice he couldn't exactly stop her from sleeping with their son.

After Mason fell asleep, the department store delivered the packages Nyla had ordered earlier that day.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Seeing the two large trucks filled with gifts, Damon raised an eyebrow in surprise. "How much did you buy?"

"I bought all of his birthday and holiday gifts until he turns 20," Nyla answered. "I also labeled and categorized them by year. When the time comes, you can just pick one and give it to him."

Damon was at a loss for words.

After the service staff moved everything into the designated room, Nyla finished organizing the gifts.

When she turned around, she found Damon leaning silently against the doorframe.

Sensing something was off, she asked, "Damon, what's wrong?"

He pressed his lips together, meeting her gaze. "You prepared all these gifts for Buddy... What about me? Don't you have something for me to keep? Are you really planning to just leave like this?"

Nyla stepped closer, standing directly in front of him. "Buddy is the most precious thing I'm leaving for you. And I'm not disappearing forever. One day, the three of us will be together again."

Damon pulled her into his arms, holding her so tightly that she could feel his body trembling.

She gently hugged him back, whispering, "Damon, as long as our hearts remain connected, that's all that matters."

It took a long time for Damon to finally calm down.

Releasing her slightly, he gazed at her and asked, "When do you plan to tell Buddy that you're leaving?"

"I haven't decided yet," Nyla replied.

Leaving suddenly would be cruel to Mason, who was only five. It would be cruel to her, too.

She didn't know how long she'd be gone-maybe she'd never return. Maybe, when she did, he wouldn't need her anymore.

No matter what, time lost could never be recovered.

Damon frowned. "You have to tell him tomorrow, or there won't be time. If you can't do it, I will."

Nyla bit her lip. "I'll tell him."

"Good," Damon replied.

That night, after showering, Damon carried Mason into their bedroom.

Mason's bed was too small. There was barely enough space for Nyla, let alone the three of them. If Damon insisted on squeezing in, he'd probably end up on the floor

Mason was placed between them.

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Once he finally settled in, Nyla turned off the lights.

In the darkness, Damon wrapped his arms around both Nyla and Mason, pressing a light kiss to her forehead.

"Sleep," he said softly.

The next morning, Damon woke at dawn.

Noticing Nyla wasn't in bed, he frowned and got up to look for her.

After searching the house, he finally found her in the garden, taking a morning stroll.

Walking over, he took off his coat

and draped it over her shoulders

"It's cold in the morning. Why

you

are dressed so lightly belongs to

When he held her hand, it was ice-cold. Without another word, he picked her up and carried her inside.

"I'm fine," Nyla protested. "I just couldn't sleep, so I came out for a walk. It's not that cold."

"Your hands are freezing. If I hadn't woken up, you'd have turned into an ice block out here," Damon grunted.

She chuckled. "You're exaggerating. I'm wearing two layers, it's just my hands that are a little chilly."

By the time she finished speaking, they were already inside the villa.

"Alright, put me down. I'll go upstairs and change," she said.

Damon didn't let go. Instead, he carried her toward the sofa. "Wait here. I'll go upstairs and get you something warmer."

"I'll go up myself. Buddy is probably awake by now," Nyla replied.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Damon paused mid-step and turned back to look at Nyla. "Alright."

Seeing him walking toward her again, clearly about to pick her up, she quickly stopped him. "No need, I can walk on my own."

Afraid he'd insist on carrying her anyway, she immediately stood and hurried toward the stairs, taking the long way around the couch.

Watching her flee, Damon couldn't help but smirk. But as the smile lingered, a shadow of sadness darkened his gaze.

Unaware of his emotions, Nyla quickly returned to the bedroom.

Mason was already awake, sitting on the bed, groggily rubbing his eyes.

When he saw her, he asked in a soft, sleepy voice, "Mommy, when did you carry me here?"

His messy bedhead and drowsy little face were so adorable that Nyla couldn't resist reaching out to pinch his cheek. "After you fell asleep last night. Now that you're up, go back to your room and change, okay?"

Mason nodded and was about to climb out of bed when he suddenly noticed something. "Mommy, I can't find my slippers."

Nyla glanced around and realized that when Damon had carried Mason over last night, they hadn't brought his slippers along.

"I'll carry you back to your room, alright?" she offered.

"Okay! Thank you, Mommy!" Mason cheered.

As Nyla picked him up, he wrapped his little arms around her neck and kissed her on the cheek. "Mommy, you've been so nice to me these past few days."

Ever since he'd turned three, Nyla hadn't let him sleep in the same bed with her. Nyla's steps slowed as she asked, "When have I ever not been nice to you?" "You're always nice to me, Mommy, but lately, you've been extra nice," Mason elaborated.

"Are you happy about that?" Nyla asked.

"Yes! I love Mommy the most!" With that, Mason planted another kiss on her cheek.

Seeing his bright little smile, Nyla couldn't help but smile too.

After carrying him back to his room, she returned to the master bedroom to change.

By the time she had dressed and finished washing up, Mason had already gone downstairs.

Just as she was heading down, her phone rang-it was Harrison's housekeeper. "Ms. Kinsey, the doctor checked on Mr. Jayston this morning and said he's ready to be discharged. I'll handle the paperwork shortly," she informed her.

Nyla replied, "Alright, thank you."

After ending the call, she put her phone away and walked over to Mason, who was sitting on the couch. "Buddy, Mommy has something to tell you."

He looked up from his book. "What is it, Mommy?"

Nyla hesitated for a moment before speaking. "Mommy has to go somewhere far away in a couple of days, and we won't be able to see each other for a long time. While I'm gone, you have to listen to Daddy and be good, okay?"

The book in Mason's hands dropped to the floor. Tears welled up in his big, round eyes.

"Mommy... are you going to die? I don't want you to die!" Crying, he threw himself into Nyla's arms, clung to her, and refused to let go.

Nyla's heart ached, but his misunderstanding made her laugh despite herself.

She gently wiped his tears and

clarified, Mommy's just going somewhere far away, and we might not be able to see each other for a

few years. But we can still talk on the phone, okay?"

"I don't believe you..." Mason sobbed harder. "There's a kid in my class whose dad passed away. Before he died, also said he was going somewhere far away... Mommy, I don't want you to die!"

Seeing him cry so hard he could barely breathe, Nyla tried to console him. "That's not the same, sweetie. Didn't I just say? We can still call and video chat.

scold you because you did something wrong?"

Between sobs, Mason choked out, "Master... my mom's leaving! She's going far away! I don't want her to go!"

The moment he finished speaking, there was a long silence on the other end of the line.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

After a long pause, Alexander finally spoke to comfort Mason. "Buddy, don't be sad. Your mom probably has something important to take care of, but she'll definitely come back to you one day."

Mason wiped his tears. "How long is 'one day'?"

"Well... I'm not sure. You'll have to ask your mom," Alexander replied.

"Okay..." Mason muttered.

Alexander continued to console him for a while before ending the call. He set his phone down, walked over to the window, and let out a quiet sigh as he gazed into the night.

Nyla was leaving for Meristate, and who knew when she'd be able to return? It might be years before Mason could see her again.

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Nyla paced anxiously around the living room, constantly glancing up at the second floor. Worry was etched on her face as Mason still refused to leave his room.

Seeing her restlessness, Damon walked over, gently took her arm, and guided her to sit on the couch.

"Nyla, worrying won't help. Buddy needs time to process this. If he still won't come out in a few hours, I'll go talk to him, okay?" he suggested.

Nyla nodded. "I just... I'm afraid he'll stay locked in his room too long. What if something happens?"

"It won't. Trust me, Buddy is stronger than you think," Damon reassured.

Nyla's nerves gradually settled.

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Two hours later, she went upstairs to check on Mason. The tray of food she had left at his door remained untouched.

She bit her lip and knocked softly. "Buddy, are you asleep?"

A moment passed before his muffled voice came through the door. "I don't want to eat. Leave me alone."

His tone was full of frustration, still upset about her leaving.

Nyla turned to Damon with worry in her eyes. "What should I do? He still won't talk to me."

"It's okay. You should go back to your room. I'll talk to him," Damon said.

"But-" Nyla tried to protest.

Damon looked at her firmly. "I know you're worried, but right now, he's not ready to listen to you. If you stay, he won't open the door. Trust me.

Let me handle it."

After a moment of hesitation, she finally nodded. "Alright... I'll wait in the bedroom."

"Good," Damon replied.

Once Nyla left, Damon gently knocked on the door. "Buddy, can you open the door? Let's have a talk."

"No! You and Mommy are both terrible! I don't want to see either of you ever again!" Mason cried.

Damon lowered his voice and spoke patiently. Buddy, whether you agree or not, your mom is leaving the day after tomorrow. If you spend the rest of today being angry, you'll regret it later."

Silence ensued, but Damon knew Mason was listening.

"Just open the door so we can talk, okay?" he urged.

Damon didn't push further, simply waiting.

After a while, small footsteps approached, and finally, the door creaked open.

Looking down, Damon saw Mason's tear-streaked face. His eyes were red and puffy, making him look heartbreakingly pitiful.

As soon as Mason saw Damon, his voice cracked. "Daddy... I don't want Mommy to leave."

Damon scooped him up and carried him downstairs, speaking softly.

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she

e said she has to go for

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"If you miss her, we can video call her anytime. And when we get the chance, I'll

take you to see her."

"It's not the same," Mason insisted.

Damon nodded. "I know. But there's nothing we can do."

Chapter 1200

"Can't she just take me with her?" Mason asked.

Damon hesitated. The kid was too smart for his own good.

"If you go with Mommy, what about me? I'd be all alone in this big house.

Would

you really leave me here by myself?" Damon asked.

"You still have Lydia and everyone else," Mason answered.

"But they're not the same as you and Mommy. You and Mommy are the most important people to me," Damon explained.

Mason thought for a moment. "Then why don't you come with us?"

Damon sighed. "I can't. I have to run the company. If I leave, thousands of people

will lose their jobs. Would you want all those families to go hungry?"

"I don't... but I don't want Mommy to leave either," Mason replied.

"I don't want her to leave either. But she has to. So why don't you stay here with me and wait for her to return, okay?" Damon asked.

Mason wanted to refuse, but seeing his father's sad expression, he couldn't bring himself to say no.

Although Mason was more mature than other kids his age, he wasn't perceptive enough to realize Damon was guilt-tripping him into agreeing.

Noticing Mason's silence, Damon quickly changed the subject. "Let's not think about that for now. You should eat something first."

Lydia had been keeping the food warm.

The moment Damon brought Mason to the dining table, she immediately served the dishes along with a bowl of chicken soup.

Mason hadn't felt hungry before, but as soon as the aroma of the food hit him, his stomach growled.

Damon set him down in a chair and sat beside him. "Go on, eat."

Mason hesitated for a moment, then finally picked up his spoon and began eating.

Half an hour later, after finishing his meal, Damon carried him to the living room couch.

"Buddy, I'm going to call Mommy down now, okay?" Damon asked.

Mason turned his head away, clearly still upset.

Damon ruffled his hair gently. "Mommy is leaving soon. Let's not waste the little time we have left by being mad, okay?"

After a long silence, Mason finally nodded. "Okay."

"I'll go get her." Damon quickly headed upstairs and pushed open the bedroom door.

The moment Nyla saw him, she jumped up from her chair. "How is Buddy? Did he come out?"

"Yeah, he ate dinner and is waiting in the living room. You should go down," Damon replied.

"Okay." She hurried downstairs, reaching the living room in under a minute. Sitting beside Mason, she spoke softly. "Buddy"

Before she could finish, Mason threw

"Momself into her arms. "Mommy, I really don't want voel.ne leave. Can't you stay with me and Daddy?"

Nyla's heart clenched, her eyes stinging.

She gently stroked his hair and whispered, "don't want to leave you and Daddy either, but I have to. Buddy, while I'm gone, you have to listen to Daddy, okay? I'll call and video chat with you as often as I can."

"Okay..." Mason reluctantly agreed.

For the next day and a half, Mason clung to Nyla, refusing to leave her side. Even

at night, he insisted on sleeping with her.

Damon barely had a chance to spend time alone with her he had to wait until Mason fell asleep.

Soon, the day of Nyla's departure arrived.

After finishing her packing, she called Lydia into her room.

"Lydia, I might be gone for a long time. While I'm away, please help me take care

of Buddy and Damon.

"Damon has a weak stomach-make

sure he eats on time. And as for

Buddy. if you have time, please

spend more time with him. I'd really appreciate it," she requested