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After breaking free from the students' blockade, Emily's convoy slowly made its way toward Sandalwood Group. Inside the car, Emily stared vacantly out the window. Her earlier enthusiasm for the lecture at Alnewgo University had evaporated, overshadowed by the unpleasant incident that had just occurred.

She couldn't help but reflect on the recent series of misfortunes, most of which seemed to stem from that annoying Jack.

"Looking back, it was really wise not to choose to cooperate with him," Emily thought to herself, feeling even more disdain for Jack's character.

It was clear to her that he lacked a proper upbringing, something that could only be attributed to his background.

The convoy arrived at Sandalwood Group, where the guards quickly lined up and respectfully opened the car door for Emily.

Walking into the company and making her way to the top floor, Emily saw her husband, Quintis, leisurely reading the newspaper.

She set down her bag and softly asked, "Aren't you busy today?"

"I've left things for Tristan to handle. He's grown now, and I plan to have him take charge of Sandalwood Group's operations in the Solara mainland," Quintis replied, setting the newspaper down.

Despite his reservations about Tristan's abilities, Quintis knew that, eventually, Sandalwood Group would be passed on to him.

"What's wrong? You seem out of sorts. Was the lecture not enjoyable?" Quintis asked with concern.

Emily smiled faintly and responded, "The lecture itself was great. It was nice seeing the young faces at Alnewgo University; it reminded me of our own child. But someone has left me in a bad mood."

"Oh? Who?" Quintis asked, intrigued.

Emily then recounted the entire incident with Jack to Quintis.

After listening, Quintis chuckled and reassured her, "Come on, don't let a young man get to you. Should I ask Olivia to come up and chat with you?"

Emily shook her head and softly said, "Quintis, why don't we go back to Tarthy City for a while? I've been in Alnewgo too long, and I'm starting to miss Tarthy City."

Quintis laughed heartily, agreeing to her request without hesitation.

That day, the couple made their way back to Tarthy City. By the time they arrived, it was already late in the evening.

The people of Tarthy City had long been informed of their return. A red carpet stretched across the airport floor, and the distinguished butler, Jenson Wright, from the Regal Crown Estate, stood waiting respectfully to welcome them.

The couple was driven in a special bulletproof Rolls-Royce, escorted by a grand convoy, all the way to the Lycan Estate atop the mountain.

Sandalwood Group dominated the Tarthy City region—an unseen giant pulling the strings behind the scenes. While their name wasn't widely recognized in Tarthy City, their influence reached every corner of the region.

Finally arriving at the Lycan Estate, the servants lined up in perfect formation to greet them as though welcoming royalty.

Once inside, Emily and Quintis walked into the living room, where Jenson respectfully inquired about their dinner plans.

Quintis waved his hand, saying he was tired and wanted to rest. Jenson dismissed the staff to let them relax.

The next morning, Emily woke up early, as was her long-standing habit. After doing some yoga and breathing in the fresh air, she felt revitalized.

She then went to the kitchen herself to prepare breakfast for Quintis.

After Quintis got up, he went to his study, reviewing current news and the documents delivered by his staff.

Running such a large group kept him extremely busy.

Meanwhile, Laura and Jenson were waiting in the living room.

After her morning activities, Emily often took walks in the garden, or she and Quintis would meet with political figures, enjoying tea with other wives, showing off her diplomatic skills as a respected lady.

"Where has Carla been lately?" Emily suddenly asked, remembering something and turning to Jenson.

Jenson softly replied, "Mrs. Lycan, Ms. Shepherd has been unwell recently, so she hasn't been able to come to work these past couple of days. She asked me to inform you."

Emily simply nodded without giving it much thought.

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Carla had been the Lycan family's trusted nanny for many years, always diligent

and reliable, earning Emily's deep trust. But time had its toll, and the years of hard work had taken a toll on her health.

Upon hearing that Carla was unwell, Emily felt a twinge of concern. She thought about visiting the elderly woman but was soon distracted by another thought.

"By the way, has Nic's room been tidied up?" Emily suddenly asked.

Jenson looked apologetic and replied, "Mrs. Lycan, you had instructed that only you and Ms. Shepherd could enter to clean the room, so..."

Emily understood. Since Carla was sick and she had been busy with matters in Solara mainland, Nicholas' room had not been cleaned. But she couldn't fault Jenson, as this was a rule she had set herself.

Nicholas' room had once been the sanctuary of Emily and Quintis's only son, Nicholas Lycan. Ever since the child went missing at the age of five, Emily had kept the room as it was, hoping one day he would return. She had cared for it for over a decade, maintaining it exactly as it had been, holding on to the hope, however faint, that a miracle might happen.

Although Emily and Quintis were nearly certain that Nicholas was no longer alive, Emily still harbored a sliver of hope. She wished that one day, their son would walk through that door again and that he would feel how much they loved him when he saw the room they had kept for him.

However, Emily knew deep down that day might never come.

The room had become more of a shrine to her lost son, a way to channel her grief. She had always been careful to ensure that the room remained untouched by anyone else, allowing only Carla to clean it. Clara was meticulous, and Emily trusted her alone with the task.

Now that she had been away for some time and Carla was ill, Emily worried that the room might have accumulated dust.

After finishing her tea, she decided to go upstairs and clean it herself.

When she reached the door to the room, she fumbled through her bag for the key but couldn't find it. She had clearly placed it in the bag earlier, so how could it be missing now?

There were only two copies of the key-one in her possession and the other with Carla.

Emily had always been very careful with her key, so it was puzzling that she couldn't find it now.

It would be impractical to ask Carla to bring the key over since she was still resting at home.

Frustrated, Emily went downstairs, where Carla couldn't help but ask, "Mrs. Lycan, is something wrong?"

Emily sighed softly and said, "The key to Nic's room is missing."

She searched through her memories but couldn't remember where she had placed the key.

Upon hearing this, Laura reached into her pocket, pulled out a key, and handed it to Emily. "Mrs. Lycan, is this your key?"

Emily took the key and looked at it. It was indeed the key to Nic's room, but something about it felt off, though she couldn't quite pinpoint what was wrong.

She nodded slowly and said, "Yes, it's this one!"

But then, a bit confused, she asked, "How did this key end up in your hands? And my key always had something attached to it!"

Laura answered honestly, "I found it yesterday when I was at Alnewgo University. It was just the key, nothing attached."

It turned out that after Laura had a confrontation with Jack at Alnewgo University

the day before, she had found the key on the ground. Since Laura often followed Emily and assumed the key was hers, she had picked it up.

Now, it seemed that it truly belonged to Emily.

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Emily didn't press the matter any further. Although the key had a million-dollar emerald ornament attached to it, to her, it was worthless. As long as the key was still in her possession, that was what mattered most.

Holding the key in her hand, Emily made her way upstairs. She gently inserted the key into the lock and gave it a slight twist.

The door opened with ease.

A faint scent wafted out from the room. Emily stepped inside, opened the window, and pulled back the curtains to let the warm sunlight flood the space. Instantly, the room was filled with the fresh, comforting scent of sunlight.

She lightly sprayed some perfume to freshen the air even more. This had become part of her daily routine.

Next, she meticulously checked every corner of the room, ensuring everything was in place before feeling reassured.

Although the room was already spotless, she took the broom and began cleaning again, focusing on every detail.

After finishing, Emily didn't leave immediately. Instead, she sat quietly on the bed that had once belonged to her son. She touched the surroundings and recalled the countless moments they had spent there.

This was once the place where Quintis would read stories to Nicholas. When Nicholas was upset, Emily would often sleep beside him to comfort him. The room was filled with so many wonderful memories of her child.

But all of those beautiful memories were now sealed within her heart.

She gazed at the photo frame on the bedside table, still pristine and new, and without realizing it, tears began to fall.

In the picture, a young Emily and Quintis were embracing each other tightly, with their son Nicholas nestled between them. The little boy was hiding in his mother's arms, smiling innocently and brightly.

The three of them together-everything seemed so perfect, so harmonious.

Whenever Emily looked at this photo, her tears would fall uncontrollably. How happy their family had been? But now, all that remained was the final family portrait, the last memory of the complete family.

Emily reached out, running her fingers over the photo again and again, her tears blurring her vision. Her heart was filled with endless longing and pain.

"Nic, tell me, where are you? Do you know how much I miss you? How much I wish you could appear in front of me again, even just for one more look. I would give anything for that."

But no matter how much she called out, the only response was silence.

She opened the drawer, which was filled with memories of Nicholas' childhood. Like all mothers, she had taken many photos of him at important moments, even hiring a professional photographer to perfect them. These photos had been looked at countless times, their edges worn from handling, but Emily still couldn't help but leaf through them.

Looking at the innocent little boy in the pictures, Emily's heart swelled with endless motherly love and tenderness.

Her thoughts drifted back to the devastating earthquake that had changed everything. It happened in a small city in the Solara mainland-Perthter City.

At the time, Emily and Quintis had been planning to expand Sandalwood Group's business into the mainland and decided to take a trip to Perthter City. But they never could have imagined that this trip would turn into a nightmare for their family.

The earthquake struck with a magnitude of 7.

At the time, the family was visiting an exhibition on the second floor of the Perthter City Museum.

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In an instant, the earth trembled as if the world itself were coming to an end.

Quintis instinctively grabbed Emily, pulling her toward the exit, but as he tried to reach for Nicholas, the ground suddenly cracked open. A massive beam fell, completely blocking their path. Emily would never forget the terror and despair in their son's eyes.

There was no time to dwell on it. If they didn't escape, all three of them would be buried alive. Emily couldn't resist Quintis's forceful pull, and together, they fled the

museum.

As Quintis and Emily escaped, he turned back, desperately wanting to go back for their son, but the earthquake had reached its most violent stage. The museum collapsed and disintegrated under the force of the quake. They could only watch helplessly as their son was buried in the rubble.

Dust filled the air, and cries and screams echoed all around.

At that moment, Emily's heart felt as though it had been ripped apart. She knelt before the rescue workers, begging them to save her child. She was willing to pay any price to get him back.

However, even with Emily and Quintis using their influence to mobilize all the rescue forces from the city and even the province, after five days and nights of digging, nearly all the victims were found-but there was no sign of their son.

Life detectors found no signs of life either.

Emily remained by the rubble, hoping for any news that their son had been found. But all of it was in vain. Her son was never rescued.

In fact, they couldn't even find his body.

The rescue workers explained that their son might have been crushed to nothing under the rubble or perhaps swallowed by the earth through a crack.

But Emily refused to accept this truth. She hired the best specialists in the world to continue the search, digging deeper and deeper into the earth. After a month, they still found nothing.

In the end, Emily only found a pair of shoes and a piece of clothing that had belonged to her son.

It was then that Emily finally understood. Her child was gone forever. In that earthquake, she lost her most beloved son. In that moment of despair, she knelt on the museum's ruins, crying with a broken heart.

When her tears ran dry, blood began to flow.

The doctors warned her that if she continued like this, she would eventually go blind. But Emily no longer cared. She had lost her son, lost all hope and happiness. What was the point of living? All she could do now was cling to these photos and memories to survive the rest of her life.

When Emily returned to Tarthy City, every day was consumed by her grief. She often found herself wandering into her son's room, staring at the childhood photos, and tears would inevitably fall.

For all these years, Emily had spared no expense in searching for any trace of her son. She had sent people to search over and over again.

Even fearing that the site of the disaster might hold clues, she had bought the

land where the museum had once stood. But all her efforts came to nothing. Even though she had combed every inch of that land, there was no trace of her son.

Eventually, Emily was forced to accept the most unbearable truth.

She decided to build a museum on that land, a silent memorial to the son she had lost. But that didn't mean Emily had given up entirely.

As a mother, she kept her hopes alive, imagining that perhaps, amidst the chaos, someone had rescued her son, that he wasn't buried under the rubble.

With this hope in her heart, she began searching throughout Perthter City for missing persons from that time, hoping to find a clue, any clue, that could lead her to her son.

But, to her despair, she found nothing.

Emily then turned her attention to orphanages, fearing that her son might have been sent there.

To leave no stone unturned, she even went as far as to invest heavily to take control of all the orphanages in Perthter City.

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In an effort to improve the lives of the orphans there, Emily invested a large sum to enhance their meals. This initiative made the orphanages in Perthter City-a model not only for the country but for the world, attracting numerous visitors who came to learn from them.

At the same time, Emily also paid close attention to cases of abducted children. Whenever she heard that the police had found missing children, she would travel long distances to offer her assistance. But each time, she went with hope and returned in disappointment.

Her husband, Quintis, steadfastly supported her efforts. He even expanded the scope of aid from Perthter City to the entire province. With the strong backing of Sandalwood Group, orphanages throughout the province were significantly improved. However, despite all their efforts, there was still no breakthrough.

Years passed, and still, they had no leads on their son.

Eventually, Emily began to accept the cruel reality. She shifted her focus to helping Quintis expand Sandalwood Group's business. At the same time, she brought her nephew Tristan into the group, raising him as her own.

As she reflected on these past years, Emily felt a mix of emotions.

At that moment, after finishing looking through the photos of her son from birth to five years old, Emily sighed softly and was about to close the photo album and leave the room. But then, she noticed something glinting on the windowsill- metal.

It was the key she had been searching for earlier!

Emily was startled as she realized that the key, still attached to the keychain, was intact, with a small layer of dust on it. It was clear that it had been here for some time.

She froze, suddenly remembering that when she came earlier to clean the room, she had wedged the key against the window to keep it from blowing open in the wind. After finishing cleaning, she must have forgotten about it and closed the door.

But when Emily saw the key in her hand, a question arose in her mind if the key had been here, then where had the key Laura gave her come from?

A sense of confusion and mystery washed over Emily's mind.

Quickly collecting herself, she decided to keep both keys and go downstairs to ask Laura for clarification.

When Emily asked Laura about the key, Laura seemed puzzled and explained that she had found it on the ground after the confrontation with Jack. She had assumed it was Emily's key and had picked it up.

Emily believed Laura's words, but she couldn't shake the lingering feeling of

unease.

What if there had been a theft in her home? Could someone have snuck in and copied the key?

Though the likelihood of a theft in the home of the Sandalwood Group's CEO was slim, it wasn't impossible. If someone had gained access to a key to the house, their intentions might go far beyond just stealing money.

After all, Sandalwood Group had grown from a small company to a global giant over the years, and with that success came a number of competitors who had fallen by the wayside. Some of these competitors were formidable, and if they had a key to the house, it could pose a serious threat to the safety of the couple.

Emily decided to go personally to check with Carla about whether she had lost a key. Since Carla was still bedridden with illness, Emily also thought it would be a good opportunity to visit her.

Carla lived in a modest apartment building in Tarthy City.

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Tarthy City, though not a large city, boasted a population of several million, approaching ten million. As an Asian financial hub, the real estate prices were naturally sky-high. For an average person, owning a home in Tarthy City was almost a lifetime dream.

The reason Carla owned a home here was entirely the result of her hard work. Having worked for the Lycan family for many years, Laura had always been diligent in her duties. As a result, Emily paid her an exceptionally high salary, one that even exceeded the wages of many white-collar workers in Tarthy City's financial sector. This was enough for Carla to afford a nice apartment in a desirable location.

The convoy arrived at the apartment building, and the security guard at the entrance, upon seeing the row of luxury cars with bulletproof glass and the rare special license plates from Tarthy City, was so startled that he not only didn't dare to stop them, but he even stood up to salute.

Emily hadn't given prior notice of her visit. When she arrived at Carla's door and rang the bell, it didn't take long before a young man came to open the door. He was Carla's son, Skyler Curry, who worked part-time and was an honest man. He had met Emily once at the Lycan Estate.

Seeing Emily at the door, Skyler was immediately shocked.

Emily's visit was truly an honor, a tremendous privilege for the entire Shepherd family. Skyler's face was filled with smiles as he eagerly and humbly said, "Oh, it's Mrs. Lycan! Please, come in! Please take a seat."

While leading Emily and her party inside, he hurriedly ran into the house to call his father, Ashton Curry, to greet her and had his wife, Maisie Houghton, prepare the family's prized tea collection.

Upon hearing that Emily had come unexpectedly, the entire Shepherd family was thrown into a flurry of activity. For them, Emily and Quintis were figures on a pedestal, their great benefactors. Such a visit was not something they could afford to take lightly.

Ashton rushed out. "Mrs. Lycan, why didn't you let us know in advance? We haven't really tidied up the house, and now that you're here, we didn't have a chance to prepare anything. It's really too much to trouble you like this!"

The Shepherd family members lined up as if waiting for Emily's inspection.

Emily smiled and said, "Please, there's no need to be so formal. I just heard that Carla was ill, so I wanted to come by and check on her."

"Oh, it's nothing serious, she'll be fine soon. How could we trouble you to come all the way here, Mrs. Lycan?" Even as he said this, Ashton was filled with gratitude. What employer would be so considerate toward their employees? And anyway, the salary Emily paid Carla was already more than they could ask for.

Maisie was busy tidying up the room. Though the room was already very clean, since Emily was an honored guest and their benefactor, the Shepherd family was worried that it wouldn't be tidy enough and might leave a bad impression. They would have scrubbed every floorboard if they could.

Seeing the Shepherd family so eager to please, Emily felt somewhat embarrassed. She smiled and said, "There's no need for all this. I'm just here to check on Carla, and I'll leave soon."

As she spoke, she gestured to Carla, who immediately instructed others to bring up various supplements and luxury items that Carla's family might need. There were toys for the children and imported luxury goods for the adults, all valued at least a hundred thousand dollars. This made the Shepherd family members ecstatic.

To Emily, these items were nothing. They were just a small gesture of her goodwill. But for ordinary people, they were the stuff of dreams.

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Ashton, feeling a little embarrassed, asked, "Mrs. Lycan, it's already such an

honor for you to visit us, and yet you've brought such expensive gifts? We really can't accept this."

Emily smiled softly, "These are just small gifts, and you deserve them. If you like them, I'll be happy."

Emily meant it-Carla had done so much for the Lycan family.

"Then... then quickly, quickly, let's prepare some snacks for Madam. I'm sure you must be hungry after coming all the way here," Ashton urged, and Maisie hurried off to prepare.

Emily quickly waved her hand. "No need. I'll just stay for a bit and then leave."

Her words hinted that she wouldn't stay long, so the Shepherd family stopped insisting. They understood that perhaps Emily wasn't used to their home-cooked meals, and pressing her would do no good.

At that point, Skyler had already made sure Carla was comfortable, so Emily walked into Carla's room.

Although Carla appeared a little pale, her spirits were still high. Seeing Emily, Carla tried to get up to greet her, but Emily gently stopped her.

Emily asked with concern about Carla's health and reassured her to rest and recover, stating that once she was better, she was welcome to return to work at any time. She also made it clear that Carla's salary would continue to be paid during her illness.

Carla was eternally grateful for this.

After that, Emily brought up a topic. "Carla, I wanted to ask you something. Do you remember the key to Nic's room?"

Carla nodded. "Of course I remember. I've kept that key safe and always with me."

Emily's expression grew serious as she continued, "Have you ever given it to anyone? Because a few days ago, someone found an identical key somewhere else, so I wanted to ask you about it."

Carla's face immediately tensed, "I never gave it to anyone, Mrs. Lycan, I assure you. I've always kept it safe, never leaving it lying around."

Saying this, Carla quickly called her husband over. Ashtonthen retrieved a small locked safe from the drawer. Opening it, inside, besides some valuables, was the key to Nicholas' room.

Emily couldn't help but feel moved by how carefully Carla had taken care of the key. This key was incredibly important to Emily, and to see that Carla had treasured it so much, even storing it in a safe, made Emily admire her attention to detail. It also assured her that the key had not been passed on by Carla.

With the Shepherd family's enthusiastic escort, Emily left.

As she sat in the car on her way back, Emily's brow furrowed, deep in thought about the key's origin. She never took her own key off her person, and the fact that it appeared in Nicholas' room meant it had never been brought there. Carla had kept the key so securely-so where had this other key come from?

Her heart raced with a growing sense of unease.

Back at the Lycan Estate, Emily examined the key again, her mind filled with confusion. Where did this key come from? How had it ended up in distant Alnewgo? And it was gold-plated too?

There had originally been only three gold-plated keys-one for her, one for Quintis, and one for their son. The one Carla kept had to be Quintis'.

As Emily pondered, she suddenly noticed something on the key-it was engraved with three letters that read, "Nic".

Emily immediately rubbed her eyes in disbelief. No, she wasn't seeing things. The letters on the key were indeed "Nic".

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Emily's heart raced faster, and her hand shook as she held the key. It was smooth -someone clearly often stroked it. She pulled out her own key to compare it.

Underneath the lights, she saw her name etched daintily onto the back of her key. She placed both keys together and compared them. They were identical, and the gold-plated surface made her sure that the other key hadn't been forged. It seemed to be an original.

The handiwork and finishing made it clear it was the same person's work. No one else could've mimicked it so closely. The keys were made by the same person.

Back in the day, Emily had paid a fortune for a master to etch the words onto the back of the key.

Oh my goodness. Was this a joke?

Emily's mind buzzed. It was as if the world had stopped revolving; she even forgot to breathe. Then, countless details about the key flooded her mind.

She distinctly remembered this key belonging to Nicholas. To prevent him from losing it, she'd kept it on a string around his neck.

When Nicholas had gone missing over a decade ago, so had the key. Why had it suddenly appeared again via Laura's hands?

What was going on? Was this a hint from the heavens?

Shock and agitation surged in Emily. She almost couldn't believe the deduction her mind had formed. The more she thought about it, the more agitated and stunned she became.

Tears streamed down her face, taking Laura by surprise. "What's wrong, Mrs. Lycan? Why are you suddenly crying?"

Emily shook her head without answering. She hastily pulled out her phone and called Quintis. "Where are you, Quintis?"

"I'm at Mr. Smythers' house," he answered. He soon noticed her odd tone and asked in concern, "What's wrong? Something seems off about you."

She sniffled and said, "Can you hurry up and come home? I have to talk to you about something important."

Quintis felt conflicted. He was with John Smythers, Tarthy City's mayor. However, Emily's tone made him realize that whatever she wanted to discuss with him was probably more important than he thought.

After a moment of consideration, he said, "Alright, then. I'll be right back."

He knew her like the back of his hand. She wouldn't lose her composure like that over something inconsequential. He bid John goodbye and ordered his driver to take him home as quickly as possible.

The journey should've taken an hour, but under his urging, he arrived in half an hour. When he got out, he saw Emily waiting anxiously for him at the door.

She could no longer hold back her tears when she saw him. They streamed down her face again.

Quintis looked at Laura and asked in confusion, "What's wrong?"

Laura was equally confused. "I... I don't know, either."

She wasn't the only one. Emily's assistants and other bodyguards looked at each other, not knowing what had happened.

Quintis soothed Emily and said tenderly, "Alright, dry your tears. Tell me what happened."

He held her hand and led her to the couch in the living room, where they sat down. Emily stopped crying and handed the key with "Nic" etched on it to him. "Look at this key!"

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Quintis took the key and looked it over twice. Then, he asked, "This is the key to Nic's room, right? What's so special about it?"

Emily suppressed her shock and said, "Laura found this at Alnewgo University. The point is that this isn't my key."

He took a closer look and frowned. "Did someone make a copy of our keys?"

His first thought was the same as Emily's-someone had broken into their home. She shook her head. "Don't jump to conclusions. Laura will tell you how she found this."

Laura didn't dare hide anything and told Quintis everything that had happened, leading to her picking up the key. His expression shifted into one of anger as he snapped, "How dare those outlaws! They need to be taught a lesson!"

Emily shook her head again. "That's not the point."

Quintis quickly realized what she was getting at. "Who dropped this key, then?"

Laura said, "I have no idea. I was busy arguing with that hooligan and didn't get the chance to ask to whom the key belonged."

Quintis turned back to Emily when he didn't get any answers. "Are you worried someone has made a copy of this key? I'll have someone tighten the security around here, then."

Emily shook her head a third time. "I have complete faith in the security."

Seeing that he didn't understand the true meaning behind the key, she pointed at the words etched on it, looking helpless. "Look at this."

He looked at the spot she was pointing at and saw "Nic" etched there. However, he was so busy with work that he didn't remember too many things about the past. "I see it-Nic. So what?"

Emily cried agitatedly, "Don't you remember what happened 15 years ago? A master carver from Dalea helped carve each of our names on the keys. This one belongs to Nic!"

Quintis finally cottoned onto what she was getting at. He listened closely, not interrupting her. She sounded a little wistful as she continued, "I'll always remember how this key hung around Nic's neck like a protective charm-it never left him.

"I kept thinking that at least he would still have his key if I were to lose mine. Who would've expected the heavens to pull such a horrible prank on us and make that visit to Perthter City Museum the last time I would see Nic? He and the key disappeared from our world."

At the time, Emily had had beautiful dreams for the future. However, reality had been much more cruel. She still had her key, but she'd lost her baby.

Quintis picked up on the most important point. "Are you saying... this key is the one that used to belong to our son?"

She nodded. This key was a vessel for longing and memories, and it had miraculously traversed time and space to appear before her again at Alnewgo University. It was such a shock.

This surprise was undoubtedly a bright light in the darkness for a mother who'd never given up hope and had always dreamed of being reunited with her child.

Quintis stared at Emily. His shock had rendered him speechless, and it took him a while to organize his thoughts. He stammered, "Are you saying that Nic..."

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"Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying!" Emily's voice was filled with vivacity and excitement like never before. The glumness in her eyes had disappeared and was replaced by unbridled joy. "I'm positive Nic is alive, Quintis! Not only is he alive, but he seems to be doing well.

"It's very likely he's now an outstanding young man thriving at Alnewgo University, which we've never stepped foot in before!"

She could almost feel her child reaching out to her. The trauma from the earthquake 15 years ago seemed to dissipate at this moment. If Nicholas were alive today, he would be about 20-the prime of his university years.

All these coincidences made her firmly believe that he was still in this world. It also seemed like he was doing well, unlike the suffering and torment she'd imagined him to have endured.

Emily grabbed Quintis' hand, her voice shaky from her agitation. "I can sense Nic's existence, Quintis. We can't wait anymore-we have to head to Alnewgo! I can't wait a moment longer, so hurry up and arrange for us to get on a flight!"

No one could imagine the agitation a mother felt upon receiving news of her child after they'd been separated for so many years. Quintis was equally agitated; tears welled in his eyes, but he kept them at a bay for the sake of his masculine ego.

He also kept his mind clear. Though he knew how much hope this discovery had given Emily, he was also worried it would only devastate her if her hopes were to fall through. It would only deal a massive blow to her health.

"You need to calm down, Emily." He patted her back and continued gently, "Be good, okay? This key is a new clue for us, but we need to remain rational. Don't forget how many times our hopes have been dashed over the years. Someone else might've picked this key up from somewhere and kept it because they liked it."

Emily jolted at his words. The hope in her eyes faded slightly, and tears of disappointment welled in them. At the sight of that, Quintis hurriedly added, "Still, we have to go and investigate the matter since you're so sure of this. Perhaps this really is a sign that Nic is calling out to us from somewhere!"

Emily's heart was overflowing with motherly love, and her hopes were rekindled by Quintis' words. Once again, her confidence in her instincts grew. "Trust me on this, Quintis. I've never felt this strongly about something. Our child is at Alnewgo University, and he's waiting for us!"

Faith was like a guiding light in the darkness. It made her believe this was an opportunity from the heavens to unravel the biggest and most important mystery in her life. She could almost see Nicholas smiling and waving at her from behind that door.

"Alright. I'll make the arrangements now!" Quintis pulled out his phone and started making the necessary calls. He and Emily both couldn't wait to open the door that would lead them to hope.

Even if they ultimately ended up with a dead trail, they still wanted to thank the key's owner for allowing them to stumble upon such an important item.

In truth, Quintis was much more expectant than Emily. However, he knew he was all she could depend on and didn't allow himself to show any sliver of weakness.

He called one of Tarthy City's private airline companies, but they were stumped. Despite him owning a private jet, the airline company would still need to make the necessary arrangements with Tarthy City Airport before they could take off.

There were many flights daily, after all. It wasn't possible to take off and land as and when they wanted.

Quintis didn't want to delay the matter any longer. He ultimately decided to use his connections and contacted John.