Chapter 19 Dominicks car rolled to a stop outside the school . followed shortly by Marissas .

As the engines hum died down , Marissa was the rst to step out .

She barely had a chance to take in the surroundings before she noticed that the person stepping out of Dominicks car wasnt Julian it was him .

She blinked in surprise , her steps quickening as she approached him .

Dom , what are you doing here ? she asked , catching up just in time .

Dominicks stride was long and purposeful , his pace never slowing for her , though she managed to match it His eyes stayed straight ahead , focused , and she could sense that something was di erent about him today .

In the past , matters like the kids school life were almost always her responsibility , occasionally Julians .

Dominick had hardly ever been involved .

Today , it was Stella who had called Marissa , urging her to come over quickly Marissa hadnt expected to run into Dominick here .

Her mind raced back to the earlier encounter with Paisley and Serena at the gate .

She felt a knot tighten in her chest .

Her eyes shifted toward the school , relieved to see that the playground was empty .

At least for now , there was no immediate sign of trouble .

Dominick had never paid much attention to the school matters he had always relied on others to handle the day to day logistics .

But today , for reasons he couldnt explain , he felt compelled to be here .

Maybe it was because he had heard about Grayson being hurt for the rst time , which caught him o guard .

As a father , he felt the need to be present , to show his support .

Marissa kept pace with Dominick as they walked toward the elementary school building .

She spoke , I heard from the principal that this child just transferred from Brightmoor and she had a bad temper .

Not only did she hurt Sonny , but even Stella got caught up in it while trying to protect him .

When Dominick heard that Stella had been hurt while protecting Grayson , his steps slowed , matching Marissas pace .

Sorry , he muttered quietly his voice low .

I never meant for Stella to get caught up in this . Marissa smiled gently , a touch of tenderness in her expression as she placed a hand on his arm .

Hey , its ma .

No need to apologize Dominick gave a small nod but said nothing more .

The tension in his chest was palpable , his mind focused solely on Grayson now .

He wanted to know how badly his son had been hurt , especially after hearing that the injury was on his neck .

As the noise from outside grew louder , Michelle and the teachers from the involved classes hurriedly walked out of the o ce , eager to greet Dominick and Marissa .

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Mr.

Vanderbilt , Ms.

Prescott , please , come in , Michelle said , extending her arm toward them , her voice laced with practised politeness .

The teachers followed suit , their smiles as wide and humble as could be .

They were all thinking the same thing .

What else can we do ? At a time like this, we have no choice but to bend over backward Mr.

Vanderbilt is a major shareholder in this school , and even the principal has to treat him with deference .

After all , where else does the schools yearly budget come from ? Grayson is the son of the biggest investor , which makes him the most important student of this school .

And now , something so catastrophic has happened to him here .

Were done for Inside the principals o ce , Stella lud long since stopped crying .

She was now sitting side by side with Grayson on the couch , her small chin had high , looking every bit like a victorious little warrior .

Her eyes , sharp with de ance , locked onto Serena , who was standing in the corner by a potted plant .

You big dummy , how dare you hit Sonny ? she said with all the authority of someone far older .

Apologize to Sonny , now Graysons cold gaze was xed on Serena as he absentmindedly touched the area on his neck where she had scratched him .

Ive never been hit in my life .

This kid is truly wacked Serena wood her ground , not saying a word , her eyes cay downward as she refused to give in and back down When the apology didnt come , Stellas patience wore thin .

Youre done for .

She tried to threaten Serena , her voice dark with a promise of retribution .

Sonnys family is on their way , and when they get here , youll be rished.

Not just you , your whole family .

Youre doomed .

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