Swapping a Broken Heart for a New Start

Chapter 3

Outside the funeral home, the wind whipped cold rain through the air—icy as a knife pressed to bare skin.

Each gust cut right through Camila Davis, making her heart feel like it had been ripped clean open.-

Standing alone by the curb, Camila clutched Lillian close. Her face was pale as milk, lips pressed tight with grief.

She'd wanted to stay, to see the funeral through, to say goodbye to her grandmother one last time.

But the Smith family... they'd been colder than the November sleet, distant and unfeeling.

And Jordan Smith—her husband of four years—well, his behavior made those four years feel like nothing more than muddy footprints trampled across her soul.

Camila had never felt more disappointed. And she couldn't deny it any longer:

Back then, on that night, Jordan Smith hadn't even called her name.

It was time to wake up and face reality.

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The funeral wrapped up that afternoon.

Camila spent the rest of the day soothing Lillian, who was all nerves and tears. Only after Lillian finally drifted off did Camila slip downstairs—just in time to see Jordan walk in, bringing a chill with him that seemed to seep right into the house.

Camila tried to pretend she didn't see him. But then she noticed the little boy by his side—and froze.

He'd brought Sandra Taylor's son home with him? Seriously?

Jordan caught her look but didn't offer a single word of explanation. His tone was flat and businesslike as he said, "Keep an eye on Daniel. They just got back to the country. His mommy's out handling some paperwork for their new place."

Camila's grip tightened so hard on her mug she thought it might shatter. Was this some kind of sick joke?

She'd just been ignored at her own grandmother's funeral, her husband watching from the sidelines with that same cold indifference—and now he wanted her to babysit his ex-girlfriend's kid?

Camila hadn't forgotten the way Daniel had talked down to Lillian in the lounge earlier, either.

"I'm not in the mood to watch someone else's kid," she said, her voice dripping with disdain. "There's a housekeeper. Let her deal with it."

Jordan's expression darkened, but Camila didn't care. She turned and started up the stairs.

With every step, her chest ached with fresh hurt.

Lillian was his daughter. She'd sobbed her heart out that afternoon, and Jordan hadn't so much as asked about her. But for someone else's child? Suddenly he was all concerned.

Jordan stared after her, annoyed, but in the end, he didn't press.

He crouched to Daniel's level, his voice gentle. "Hey, buddy, why don't you go play in the upstairs playroom? I have to get some work done in my office, okay?"

Daniel nodded, all polite and eager. "Sure, Mr. Smith. Go ahead—I can play by myself. Back home, when Mom was busy, I always played on my own!"

Satisfied, Jordan left for his study.

The moment he was gone, Daniel made a beeline for the playroom.

This place had been built for Lillian by Camila and Jordan's late grandmother, a miniature wonderland filled with toys and games, all carefully chosen for Lillian, who'd always been a quiet, solitary child.

But when Daniel saw the room, his face soured.

Seriously? That weird little girl got a whole playroom to herself?

With a pout, Daniel started tearing the place apart. He knocked over what he could, upended bins, sent blocks and stuffed animals flying.

For over two hours, he made a racket loud enough to shake the house.

Camila finally came to check on the noise—and when she saw the disaster in the playroom, she was stunned.

Lillian’s favorite place, trashed. The little Christmas tree was smashed, ornaments crushed under muddy sneakers, and the plush toys she loved lay scattered everywhere.