

## Chapter 561 A Fake Policeman

In this fleeting moment, as he gazed at Melissa, flashes of his past sprang to life. He saw his mother's desperate eyes pleading for scraps to feed her starving child.

"Walk away, Melissa," he said, a rough edge to his voice. "You weren't my mark. Once you're home, seek medical help. I may have been a bit... forceful earlier. You could have internal injuries. As for your little ones, well, they're coming with me."

Melissa's lips curved into a sneer. "My children? I'm afraid you're mistaken if you think you can just whisk them away."

His brow knitted at her cryptic response. "What are you implying?"

Melissa's smile was all the answer he needed. A shiver of unease crawled up his spine. He cast a glance at the spot that had been occupied by the children. To his shock, it was empty.

He had felt the profound bond between Melissa and her children. A bond he had thought genuine. Now he saw it for what it was: a ruse!

Deceptive. That was what this woman was.

His anger boiled over. He seized her by the throat.

"You played me! Was this your scheme all along? Distract me while your children ran?"

With a defiant nod, she admitted, "Yes, I'd do anything to keep them safe."

"You!"

He raised his hand, ready to strike, but a youthful voice halted him.

"Halt!"

Merrick and Lindsey had returned, a towering police officer in tow. They'd stumbled upon him during their escape, patrolling the streets.

"Officer! This man is a kidnapper. He invaded our school with his men! Draw your weapon, take him down!" Lindsey implored, clutching at the officer's uniform.

"Roger that! Let's bring him to justice."

As the officer reached for his holster, instead of the expected firearm, he drew a gleaming silver knife.

He held the knife and pointed it at Lindsey and Merrick. "Trying to flee, are we? I'll show you the harsh realities of this world!"

"Ah!"

With a shriek, Lindsey sought refuge behind Merrick. They hadn't anticipated the officer to be an imposter.

"Keep quiet! One more peep, and I'll scar you with this blade. Cooperate and get in the car. Don't dream of escaping."

As she watched her children at knife-point, Melissa's fists clenched. Her voice, hoarse with desperation, rang out, "Don't you dare lay a finger on my kids, or you'll regret ever crossing paths with us!"

"Regret? Ha! You should be worrying about your own fate."

Turning to his accomplice, the imposter barked, "End her. She's trouble."

Tossing the knife to his cohort, he escorted the children away.

Melissa, her heart pounding, watched her children vanish from sight. She yearned to follow but was obstructed by the knife-brandishing kidnapper.

"Time to focus on self-preservation, Melissa!"

He advanced toward her, one menacing step at a time.

Yet, Melissa stood her ground.

"Kill me now if you want. But if I live, I swear I'll rescue my kids!"

At her words, memories of his own childhood surged forward again. A stolen loaf of bread, captivity, his mother's anguished face...

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His mother's desperate plea had mirrored Melissa's and had earned him his freedom.



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