

The Love that Never Really Dies Chapter No 261

Sebastian was actually really surprised that he would catch Sasha with the bait he laid out for Kelly.

He had thought that Kelly and Xandra were plotting something big behind the scenes to go against the Hayes Corporation. But instead, his trap only netted him a dummy.

“Mr. Hayes, Kelly Green spilled everything. The books and the letters from Xandra were all from an anonymous sender. These are the documents from back then. Please take a look.”

Luke saw that Sebastian finally had some time, so he quickly handed the USB drive he got from questioning Kelly, along with some books.

Sebastian took a glimpse and picked one up.

“The Tattoo?”

“Yes. You actually helped contact some publishers for Xandra to publish this book. Sadly, it’s not her original work.”

Luke recalled what happened that year and could not help himself from feeling disgusted.

He could not imagine what was going on in Xandra’s mind when she did all that. It was clearly someone else’s work, but she acted like it was hers. There was not a hint of guilt in her.

She enjoyed all the benefits that came with the publication of that book like she deserved it. She even prided herself for it.

Sebastian's face turned cold as he took the book and flipped through it, finding his shadow in it with ease.

That was the first time Moon saw Ricky. The ten-year-old was running around in the yard with his teacher chasing after him. He was unwilling to do his schoolwork and covered in sweat. That said, he had exquisite features and a rebellious smile as beautiful as the morning sun.

That was a paragraph from the book that described the main male character.

And Sebastian remembered it like it was yesterday. It was the same scenario where he first met Sasha.

Back then, she said he was handsome. But he only thought of her as a dumb girl that annoyed everyone.

Sebastian continued reading. Sasha was young, but she had talent. Her words painted a clear picture of the story she wanted to tell, but there was a sense of sorrow between every line.

Especially when the female main character found out about the boy's secret.

Moon got home, and her mother asked about how she did in the test. Moon did not reply. She did not want to dampen her parents' expectations. Her test results indicated she was well suited for studying finance, but she did not want to walk that path. Moon wanted to become a doctor, especially one that specialized in psychology.

Sebastian suddenly stopped reading.

He felt uncomfortable. It was like something was clogging up inside his chest.

“Mr. Hayes, are you okay?”

“I’m okay. Are there anything else?” Sebastian tried to hide it and took a sip of his coffee.

So, Luke took out some more documents.

“Even though Kelly fessed up, there was zero information about the anonymous sender. They tried to contact her, but the email address has been deactivated.”

“Deactivated?” Sebastian sneered.

“So, it was all planned out. Get some hackers to look into it.”

Luke nodded. “Already on it. But Mr. Hayes, these books, did Madam write all of them?”

Luke could not stop himself from asking.

It was too much for him to handle. The notion of the president’s fiancée of five years being a fraud and that his ex-wife was the real author almost blew his mind away.

Luke was rather excited. He decided that, when Sasha woke up, he would try and get her signature. He heard that the author of those books was regarded very highly in the literature circle.

“Do you have a lot of time on your hand? I don’t mind paying you triple for the overtime.”

“Huh? Oh! Oh no! I have tons of work. My mother is still waiting for me to clean up the house. I’ll take my leave, Mr. Hayes” Luke immediately turned around and left.

He passed the kids downstairs as he left in a hurry.

The kids all looked at each other, confused at what was going on.

“Did Daddy scold Uncle Scott again?” Vivian asked.

“I think so,” said Matteo. “He’s a little stupid. Why would he come here when he knows Daddy just brought Mommy back.”

“True!” Ian, who usually did not talk, also agreed with his brother’s opinion.

After that, the kids wanted to give their parents some alone time, so they called the Hayes residence.

“Grandpa, it’s me, Matt. Did you miss us?”

“What do you think, you little brat?”

Frederick was excited as he rarely got phone calls from his grandchildren.

Hearing that, Matteo looked at his brother and sister and smiled. “Come pick us up then. We’ve decided to stay at your place for a night.”

“Really?” Frederick was ecstatic, standing up straight away. “Alright, I’ll send someone over to pick the three of you up.”

With that, he ended the call and immediately arranged for a driver.

Frederick had always treated his kin exceptionally well, whether they were his son, Sebastian, or his grandchildren, he treasured them all the same.

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Sasha had an elaborate dream.

In it, she was back in her teens, her family was prominent, and her parents were still alive. She was treated like a princess every day, living her life happily.

Then, one day, her mother brought her cousin over. “Sasha, your uncle has fallen ill, so your cousin, Xenia, is staying with us. Take good care of her, okay?”

“Okay.”

Sasha took the cousin who was two years older by the hand, delighted to have her there.

After that, Xenia settled in and did everything with Sasha. She heard that the school Sasha went to was great. So Sasha’s father enrolled her when she made her intentions clear on attending the same school.

From then onward, the two were inseparable.

“Sasha, what are you doing? Why aren’t you doing your homework?”

“I’m writing a letter. He’s overseas. I want to send him a letter every day.” Sasha was treating it very seriously, so Xenia went ahead and sat beside her.

She picked up the letter that Sasha wrote and flipped through. “He’s been gone for so long and you’ve sent him so many. Has he ever written a reply?”

Sasha’s expression instantly dulled. “No.”

She knew it was not going to happen because she never actually sent those letters out.

But that day, Xenia told her, “This won’t do. Aren’t you upset that you’ve written all these, but he never responded? Right, let me do help you send them out after this.”

“Huh? You? Help me send my letters?”

“Yes. I’ll help you mail your letters. And I’ll make sure that he responds, I promise.” Xenia was confident in her words.

Sasha did not say much after that and let Xenia take the letters away.

She figured that she was not brave enough to do it, and Xenia’s intervention gave her an excuse to send the letters to him.

Moreover, there was a smidgen of hope that she might actually get a reply from him.

That said, after Xenia took the letters, things remained the same. Every time Xenia went back, she would tell Sasha that there was no reply but also encourage her to continue writing, saying that her perseverance would definitely be rewarded one day.

Sasha would always put up a faint smile as a response, saying nothing afterward.

Further down the road, Sasha would cut down on the letter-writing as she found interest in writing stories. She started pouring all her heart and soul into it, writing down all the secrets she had.

“Sasha, why are you so good at everything? Can I see what you wrote?” Xenia was feeling envious of her cousin.

“Sure.”

Sasha was an innocent girl at the time. She never second-guessed Xenia as she was family to her.

When she heard Xenia asking about it, she immediately made a copy of everything she wrote and gave it to her.

Until the time she got into high school and the Wand family’s company was facing a huge crisis.

“Why do we from the Blackwood family have to help the Wand family with their debt? Mum, Dad, are you stupid? What have they ever given you?”

“Xenia, what are you saying? They are your aunt and uncle! They took care of you for so many years!”

“Ha! My blood gets boiling whenever I think about it! They told you that they would treat me like their own daughter. But it turns out, whatever Sasha had, I could never get. I even had to beg to go to school!”

Her parents were speechless.

After the day of the family crisis, Sasha’s father was jailed, and her mother fell ill. When she went to look for her uncle, she overheard everything Xenia said.

Did we mistreat her in any way ?

Sasha was distraught when she got back home.

She was caught off guard by the selfishness and audacity Xenia had, to be able to lie like that.

So all the kindness we showed her was all for naught ?

In the end, Sasha could not help the Wand family survive, so they went into bankruptcy. Her mother passed away from the shock, and her father was sentenced to jail for more than ten years, leaving Sasha orphaned.

Thankfully, Jackson still had a heart, so he took her in.

From then on, Sasha and Xenia swapped positions.

Sasha became the person that had to live under someone else's roof and Xenia was the princess of the house.

And then she woke up.

When she opened her eyes, the lights above her head were blurry as her eyes were watery. She blinked, and the tears she had from the dream finally slipped down.

“Mr. Hayes, is Ms. Wand still not awake ? Do we need to call Dr. Rocke over again ?”

“What time is it ?”

“It's eleven, Sir. Ms. Wand has been asleep for almost a day now. I think it's best we let Dr. Rocke come and check on her again. What if it's something serious ?”

It was Wendy talking. She was anxious as it was getting really late.

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Wendy? Am I in Royal Court One?

Sasha slowly came to her senses, and she started surveying her surroundings while still lying on the bed.

The room she was in was decorated with a cool atmosphere in mind. The walls were in shades of grey and were coupled with a white-tiled floor. The wardrobe was made of glass-like materials. It was not fully see-through, but she could still see the clothes arranged in it in an orderly manner, making it more elegant.

This bed room. It's...

Her eyes suddenly widened.

“You're awake?”

Sebastian came in and noticed her after getting Wendy to give the doctor a call.

Sasha immediately froze up. in place.

She thought that she was still in a dream as she recalled having a fall out with him, that he caught her red handed and she admitted to everything before she blacked out.

What's going on?

Sasha looked at the man in front of her, stunned.

But when Sebastian saw that she had woken up, he went straight to the side of the bed and checked on her temperature by placing his palm on her forehead.

Sasha did not know what to say.

“Your temperature is normal. Don’t worry, you’ll be fine.” He retracted his hand and looked at Sasha. She was staring at him, looking very dumbfounded of the situation.

Naturally, Sebastian was not going to tell her that he was there the entire time.

When he brought her back, she was covered in injuries, and her clothes were tattered. So, he got Roxanne to check on her, making sure that her life was not in danger before cleaning her up himself.

It was the first time Sebastian did something like this for anyone but his kin.

Sebastian poured Sasha a glass of warm water and placed it on the bedside table.

Sasha was still quiet.

She looked towards the cup of water and looked back at Sebastian before finally supporting herself to sit up.

However, as soon as she moved, she felt a sharp pain coming from her belly. “Ah!” She cried out and fell back.

At that instance, Sebastian's expression changed. He quickly bent down and helped Sasha up. Cold sweat was breaking out all over her face because of the pain.

"Does it hurt?"

"Yea." Sasha admitted, as tears welled up.

She thought that he was going to show some sympathy for her.

But instead, as soon as she answered, he started ridiculing her, even though he helped her up and placed a pillow behind her.

"Maybe you should go all the way next time. That way you won't hurt as much."

"Huh?"

Sasha a puzzled for a brief moment.

It only dawned on her when Sebastian put up a smug grin and held the glass of water up to her lips.

This scum's mouth is as nasty as always. Is he cursing for my death? Is he telling me I should just die?

Sasha accepted her fate and kept quiet. She leaned over and took a few sips of water before eventually braving herself to look at Sebastian.

"Why did you bring me back?"

"What? Have you gotten used to running around with another guy that you don't even want to come home?" Sebastian was not having it.

“No,” Sasha quickly refuted. “That’s not what I meant. I just didn’t think that I would ever come back here.”

Truth be told, Sasha already assumed she was dead when they were at the Sanders’. Sebastian hated her so much, and now he found out that she was the cause of his misery. There was no reason for him to spare her.

Sasha’s face turned pale.

Sebastian realized what she was talking about and gave her a cold grin. “I did it for the sake of the children!”

Sasha was quiet.

“You listen to me carefully, Sasha Wand. If you ever misbehave and run off again, I’m going to kill you!”

He was extremely serious.

His expression was cold as ice. Under the lighting in the room, it actually felt like there was a layer of frost on his face. It was clear that he was not messing around when he said that.

Sasha gulped.

The Sebastian at that moment looked extremely scary.

But he only said I couldn’t sneak off secretly, right? He didn’t say anything else? Does he not care about the books? About Kelly and Xandra?

Sasha looked at him, puzzled.

Nevertheless, after Sebastian finished, he took the glass away and headed to the sofa.

After that, he placed the cup down and proceeded to take out a bathrobe from the wardrobe before going into the bathroom.

Sasha was quiet throughout.

She was dumbfounded once again. She even started wondering whether she was still dreaming. If not, the scene in front of her just did not make sense to her.

Sasha sat idly on the bed for a long time.

After around twenty minutes, there were noises coming from downstairs. It sounded like someone was visiting.

“Mr. Hayes, Dr. Rocke is here.” Wendy brought Roxanne over. “Huh? Ms. Wand, you’re awake?”

She proceeded to bring Roxanne inside after she saw that Sasha was already awake.

Hence, Sasha turned towards the door and saw the young doctor. She looked exceptionally elegant, rocking a head of wavy hair.

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“Isn’t she awake?” Roxanne asked as soon as she saw Sasha sitting on the bed. She scanned the room and swiftly carried her medical kit inside towards the bed.

This doctor’s a little carefree it seems.

Sasha did not say anything, but she felt a little strange.

“Pull up your clothes!”

“What?”

“I need to check, of course. I got summoned in the middle of the night. You think I’m here to fool around?” Roxanne explained bluntly, feeling a little impatient.

“Dr. Rocke, Ms. Wand is... “ Wendy came from behind the doctor and wanted to explain.

“No need.” Sasha stopped her. “I’m a doctor too. I know what condition I’m in.” She did not want Wendy to help her explain anything.

Then, she looked towards the doctor with a straight face.

To her surprise, Roxanne was not fazed at all.

“I know you’re a doctor, but you are my patient now. If anything happened to you, it’s my responsibility.”

As soon as she finished, Roxanne pressed her hand on the spot where Sasha got kicked.

“Agh.”

Sasha immediately felt a sharp pain coursing through her body and bent her body down. Her face paled.

“Dr. Rocke, you... “

“What are you doing, Roxanne!”

Wendy could not stand and watch and wanted to stop the doctor, but the bathroom door opened up, and Sebastian walked out and shouted at her. Water was still dripping from his hair as he came out with only a white towel around his waist.

With that, the doctor took her hand off.

“Ms. Wand, are you okay?” Wendy hurried over to check on Sasha.

Sasha kept quiet.

Within a few seconds, the sweat soaked her entire shirt, and her skin was translucent.

“Don’t worry. I was just checking on how her injury was. Now, I can be sure that there’s no internal bleeding,” Roxanne explained.

She still acted very nonchalantly as her gaze shifted from Sasha to Sebastian.

When she saw that he came out with only a towel, her eyes were glued to his naked and muscular upper body, shining from the little wetness after his bath.

Sebastian noticed that and felt disgusted.

Bang!

He immediately went back into the bathroom and slammed the door. After a brief moment, he came out in a bathrobe instead.

Sasha just came back to her sense and got puzzled by what happened.

What's going on here ?

“Anything else ?” Sebastian took a glance at Sasha and asked the doctor coldly, his face emotionless as always.

“Nothing else. I told you. She's going to be fine.” Roxanne shrugged.

“You can leave then.”

Roxanne went speechless.

That bombshell caught her off guard and her eyes widened. Not only that, Sasha was astonished as well.

What's going on with this guy ? How can he be so rude ? Even if the doctor's a little mean herself, you can't just send her off like this after calling her over this late at night!

“Sebastian. It's okay. She... “ Sasha felt like he had gone overboard.

“Mr. Hayes, is this necessary ? I just took a look at you, and you're chasing me out ? I've seen you like that more than a few times, you know ? Why are you being so petty today ? Aren't you afraid that I'll stop coming over ?”

To Sasha's surprise, when she wanted to help Roxanne out, Roxanne actually said something like that right in front of her. Her expression was flirtatious, to say the least.

Sasha froze after that.

The amount of familiarity they had was uncanny. Not even she could reach the level she was at.

Who is this doctor ?

Sasha expression was starting to change.

“You better be gone within the next three seconds. If not, I’m going to throw you out,” Sebastian gave her a final warning in a cold tone.

Roxanne went quiet.

She looked at the merciless man in front of her, and finally picked up her medical kit when she had two seconds left.

“Alright. I’m leaving. Sorry for bothering you. But mind you, Sebastian. She’s still a ticking time bomb. You better think about it carefully. I don’t want to waste another eight years teaching you about it.”

Roxanne finished her remark and left.

Sasha was stunned yet again by Roxanne’s remark.

For a long time, her gaze lingered at the door with no one there while her mind was in chaos, unable to calm down.

Who the he*1 is she!

After Roxanne left, Wendy followed suit, leaving the bedroom in a quiet state.

Sebastian went and closed the door before turning back into the bathroom. After a while, Sasha could hear the sound of the hairdryer from the outside, so she assumed he was drying his hair.

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Sasha did not know what to feel about that comment.

She recalled what the doctor said earlier and felt extremely troubled. It was as if something was crushing her while she was lying on the bed.

Eight years...

Why did she spend eight years to rescue him?

And the doctor called me a time bomb. What does that mean?

The more Sasha thought about it, the more dejected she became. She flipped the blanket and decided to get a glass of water.

All of a sudden, she dropped the glass, and it broke into pieces.

Sasha's expression changed. She panicked and looked in the bathroom's direction. She bent down and wanted to clean up the shards of glass before he came out.

But the moment she squatted down, the sound of the hairdryer from the bathroom stopped.

Crap.

Sasha got even more anxious when she noticed the bathroom door was opened.

"What are you doing?" After coming out of the bathroom and noticing what Sasha was doing, Sebastian frowned in dismay.

The color drained out of Sasha's face. "I... I just want to get myself some water."

Her body stiffened when he approached her. Though her body was in pain, she still forced herself to pick up the broken pieces from the floor.

But before she could even do that, the man grabbed her by the wrist.

"Water? Did I not just give you a glass of water earlier? Why are you so troublesome?" Sebastian sounded as if he had lost his patience.

It was getting late, and he was exhausted. Yet, when he was about to rest, this woman caused another trouble. She was just a troublemaker.

Why are all women like this?

With a grim expression on his handsome face, he squatted down, picked up the shards of glass, and placed them in a napkin.

He was cleaning up the mess with one hand as his other hand was still gripping the woman's wrist.

It was as if Sebastian was afraid that Sasha would start messing around again if he released her.

Women always get on my nerves.

Sasha looked at him before turning her attention to the hand that was grabbing her wrist.

"Stand still. Stop moving anymore!" He raised his voice.

Sasha was at a loss for words and did not know how to react to that. She could only stand by the table and watch him clean up the mess.

Sasha had never seen the thoughtful side of this man like this before.

Sebastian had finally done cleaning a few minutes later.

“Do you still need water?” he asked.

Sasha hesitated for a bit and nodded.

The man then poured her a glass of warm water and gave her a few pills.

She looked at his face, which had annoyance written all over, and swallowed the pills with the water.

After that, Sebastian went to the bathroom to wash his hands.

Sasha initially wanted to get back to the bed and rest, but she decided to stand and wait for the man. “The doctor who came earlier... who is she?”

“You don’t have to know.” Sebastian refused to answer her question.

He refused to answer Sasha not because he had something to hide from her but merely because she did not need to know. After all, Sebastian was annoyed by that doctor who was also his attending physician.

Upon hearing that, disappointment was written all over Sasha’s face.

Her expression change rendered Sebastian speechless.

Why are women so paranoid?

He let out a sigh and said, “Her name is Roxanne Rocke.”

“Oh!” Sasha’s eyes brightened all of a sudden. “It’s her? So she has been treating you all this while?”

“That’s right.” Sebastian tried to be patient.

Sasha’s mood seemed to have improved. “She looks very young. She should be around your age, right?”

That was indeed a valid question.

Sebastian was already sixteen years old when he was sent to live with his uncle. Roxanne had been his doctor for eight years, and at that time, Sebastian was already twenty-four years old. Yet, they looked as if they were about the same age.

So how old was Roxanne when she started treating him? Seventeen?
Eighteen?

How is this possible?

Sasha found it hard to believe.

But Sebastian was not ready to let Sasha get her way. He sneered, “Smart people are everywhere. You think everyone is as stupid as you and would take forever to graduate?”

Excuse me? I’m stupid?

I might have taken a few extra years to complete my studies, but at least I’m a certified doctor!

Sasha’s face was stiffened with dismay.

“What makes you think I’m stupid? I might not have excelled under Dr. Kaye’s tutelage, but I self-studied and eventually became a doctor.” she defended herself. “And I even made a name for myself as a doctor in Clear. So please don’t use the word stupid on me.”

Sebastian was instantly tongue-tied upon hearing that.

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Sebastian tilted his head and looked at her. Sasha felt he appeared to be less hostile after hearing what she said.

“Fine. You’re smart but too bad, you’re not a member of the Blackwood family,” he responded.

“The Blackwoods?” Sasha had no clue what he was talking about.

“Yes. Just so you know, Roxanne is Heyman Rocke’s granddaughter.” Sebastian gave her a smirk.

Sasha’s eyes widened in shock.

She knew who Heyman was. He was Avenport’s top neurosurgeon in the eighties.

Heyman was as popular as her mother’s father, Hannick Blackwood. Hannick came from a family of Chinese physicians, and he was the *crème de la crème* of them all. While they were known for their expertise in TCM in Avenport, the Rockes were experts in Western medicine. Had the two families worked with each other, they would be invincible.

Unfortunately, the Blackwoods had eventually lost their influence in the healthcare industry.

I thought the Roche family had left the country? I've not heard about them for ages," Sasha asked.

"That's because you and the Blackwoods were ignorant. The Roche family had set up a big healthcare corporation overseas, and they have many hospitals all over the world," he explained. "And Roxanne is one of the persons who manages the corporation."

"Meanwhile, the Blackwoods..." he let out a mirthless laugh.

Sasha gritted her teeth. When will he stop humiliating me?

Sebastian's remark triggered Sasha, especially when she thought of how miserable Jackson was. Yet, what he said was true.

Once, the Roche family and the Blackwoods were the most prominent families in the city. While the former continued to thrive, the latter had lost everything they owned, including a roof over their heads.

What else could she say to refute Sebastian? She could only feel sorry for the Blackwoods, especially Xenia.

Sasha's eyes darkened.

"Are you done with your questions?" Sebastian suddenly asked and got her out of a trance.

Sasha looked at him and froze right there.

"Are you just gonna stand there for the entire night?" The man had finally lost his patience.

His tyrannical voice sent chills down Sasha's spine.

"Yeah... I'll sleep now." Sasha then turned around and was ready to return to her bed.

Suddenly, the man grabbed her by the shoulder.

Before Sasha could react, Sebastian picked up her up and carried her in his muscular arms!

The unexpected move caused Sasha to let out a scream as she was dumbstruck with fear.

Her eyes widened as she stared at the man and grabbed his collar. "What are you doing?" she asked in a trembling voice.

Her heart was racing so fast that she thought her heart was about to burst out of her chest.

But the man was bothered by how distressed she was. "You expect me to wait for you to crawl slowly to your bed?"

He then carried her to the bed.

What Sebastian did not notice was how her body scent had caused him to speak in an awkward tone.

Even his eyes had darkened.

Damn it!

He immediately pulled himself together and tucked her into bed.

Sasha did not know how to react to his action.

Though her cheeks were all red, she heaved a sigh of relief.

Thank goodness he didn't do anything crazy.

Just when she thought she could go to sleep in peace, Sebastian turned on the light. She took a glance at the man, who only had a bathrobe on, went to the other side of the bed.

What ?

Once again, Sasha was thunderstruck. She tilted her head to his side and stared at him, not knowing what to do.

Wait a second. Are my eyes playing tricks on me ?

Or has he gone mad ? Did something possess him ? What nonsense is this !

Despite lying in bed, Sasha was so flabbergasted that she could not keep her eyes shut.

“What is wrong with you ? Are you not going to sleep ?” Sebastian asked.

Once again, Sasha shuddered.

A few seconds later, she asked sheepishly, “Are you... are you going to sleep here ?”

A sudden frown warped Sebastian's face. “Do you have a problem with that ?”

Sasha replied, “No, I mean...”

“First of all, this is my bedroom. Where else can I sleep?” he said in a deep and impatient tone. “Secondly, we’re still married. Is it illegal for us to sleep together?”

Upon sensing the impatience in his tone, Sasha kept mum. The room was so quiet that she could hear his breathing clearly.

There was nothing wrong for a married couple to sleep together.

But ever since they got married, they had never shared the same bed before.

Sasha’s body stiffened, and her heart palpitated.

She kept staring at the ceiling in total darkness as she had a hard time trying to sleep.

But perhaps due to the injuries on her body, she eventually got tired and fell asleep an hour later.

When Sasha was finally sound asleep, the man beside her opened his eyes all of a sudden.

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“What a dumbass.”

Sebastian turned toward her, fixing his gaze on the woman who was slipping into slumber.

“Is it painful?” he asked.

“No...”

Sasha was drifting into sleep when she heard him speaking vaguely.

For the past five years, she had constantly kept her suffering to herself and told her children she was fine despite how much pain she felt.

Her brows stitched tightly because of the pain and she flipped on her side to cuddle in his arms. His warm embrace made her pain much more bearable.

“You’ll be fine.” His voice echoed softly in her ears as he patted her to sleep.

Over at the Hayes Residence, the somber house instantly became vivacious with the arrival of the three children.

Everyone—except for Frederick—was electrified when they knew they were coming.

“Matteo, do you want to go to my house? I happen to have a lot of delicious food at home,” one of the relatives offered.

“Matt, you and Ian should come to my house instead. I have a huge playground at my place. You guys will love it!”

“Cut it out. I asked them first.”

Everyone seemed to be enthusiastic about having the children over at their respective places, but it went without saying that they had ulterior motives.

Although their intentions were not pure, part of the reason why they wanted the kids to visit their places was that they were adorable. There

was not a single person who would say no to the children, but the main reason was that they wanted to curry favor with Frederick.

Matteo and his siblings were caught in a dilemma. Since they could not get out of the situation, Matteo decided to just flash the trump card.

“What about y’all ask Grandpa?”

Ian quickly nodded in agreement.

Only Vivian seemed unfazed by the relatives’ passionate entreats. She kept herself occupied with the little yam plant in the garden, trying to dig it out of the soil. She had heard that Frederick was the one who planted this.

When the adults heard Matteo’s suggestion, they had no other choice but to let Frederick make the decision for them.

The old man was pleased when all the adults came to ask for his permission.

Everyone who stayed at the residential compound was a member of the Hayes family. After Frederick’s father built the family business and had three sons of his own, he asked all of them to come over and stay together to make sure the family never grew apart.

The residence was capacious. There were more than ten courtyards and the whole area was able to house everyone. One would easily get lost wandering around the compound unguided. It would take more than a day to finish going around the residence.

It was for this reason that the Hayes did not break away from the family residence and go out to stay on their own.

Frederick was elated when he found out that everyone was eager to invite his grandchildren over.

“They can go to your place, Roderick.” Frederick spelled the verdict after some thoughts.

“Alrighty!”

When Roderick found out the children were going home with him, he leaped like a happy kid in front of Frederick.

He held his head high in pride and marched out of the door under everyone’s jealous gazes.

“Follow me, kids. Your grandpa has given y’all the green light to come to my place.”

“We’re going to grand-uncle’s place?”

Matteo shot Ian a curious gaze. “He’s the one who gave me the gold pendant last time, right?”

Ian nodded briefly.

The child did not seem excited about the news at all. To be precise, there was a hint of despise on his face when he found out Roderick was bringing them home.

Ian’s reluctance elicited a frown on Matteo’s brows.

Meanwhile, everyone was disgruntled when they found out the children were following Roderick.

“He’s a real good bootlicker, isn’t he? First, it was Ian. Then, it was Matteo. What is Roderick trying to get at? Help his son score some brownie points?”

“Exactly. He only has one son, so he’s doing everything he can to make sure he gets on his eldest brother’s good book. God knows he’ll even get any inheritance since they are so incompetent.”

The two women complained bitterly and vented.

There was a kernel of truth in their words.

Roderick only had one son himself. Not only was his child unambitious, but he was also a failure. The family had tried putting him in Hayes Corporation a few times, but he disappointed the family over and over again.

“Let’s just wait and see how long he can last,” the women resumed.

“Do you remember what happened to Ian? Roderick used to bring him over a lot until he fell sick. Now that the other boy is added to the family, it’s a good chance for Roderick to extend his claws again.”

Despite their loathing, the women could only rant at each other.

There was nothing they could do since Roderick was elderly.

He was the second oldest in the family now after Frederick himself.

While the two women were busy gossiping, Roderick walked over to the garden with a wide smile on his face.

“Matt, Ian, where are you? Let’s go over to my place. I’ve got lots of tasty food for you.”

Ian stood up straight when he heard the familiar voice, his expression turning cold. His sudden reaction disconcerted Matteo.

“What’s the matter, Ian?”

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Ian refused to say a word as Roderick hurried over, exhilarated.

“Now, now, Matt, aren’t you a fine boy? Come over here and give your grand-uncle a hug.”

Matteo looked at the zealous old man awkwardly.

Although both he and Vivian were there together, Roderick ignored the girl and talked only to Matteo.

Matteo’s gaze darted around as he thought of a way to get away. He went closer to Vivian and pulled her up from the ground.

“I’m sorry grand-uncle. I have to hold Vivi’s hand. She’s scared whenever she’s in a new environment.”

“Okay...”

Roderick was disheartened to hear this.

He really liked the boy and badly wanted to give him a hug.

“What about you hug Vivi, grand-uncle? She’s a good girl too.”

This girl?

She’s not even one of our us!

“It’s okay. You can walk with her. Let’s go over to my place. Your grand-aunt has made some really good food.”

Vivian was too naive to read between the lines. She followed her brothers cheerfully when she heard there would be delicious food.

Meanwhile, Ian was altogether quiet.

Although he was unwilling to go to Roderick's place, he did not throw a tantrum because his siblings were thrilled to visit a new place.

They hopped on the buggy and reached Roderick's house after ten minutes.

"Alright, kids. We're here! Be careful when you get down."

Roderick got off first and carried the children down one by one.

He was particularly careful when it came to Matteo's turn.

Roderick's wife, Gladys, treated the guests to the best food at home.

"Wow! These look so good!"

Vivian went ahead and reached for a juicy peach when she saw a huge plate of fruits, but Gladys quickly moved the plate away.

"Matteo and Ian, come over and have some fruits," she quickly beckoned, "These are all imported fruits."

She completely ignored Vivian and took the plate of fruits over to Matteo and Ian.

Tears welled up in Vivian's eyes when she saw this.

Ian's face turned gloomy seeing the dejection in the girl's eyes. "Come here, Vivi."

Matteo was vexed too.

He knew the people at the residence looked down on Vivian because she was not Sebastian's child. It was apparent from how they treated her ever since she came, but Vivian was still a child. However, she was too innocent to notice any of this.

Matteo could not believe they would go to such lengths to exclude her.

He would not allow these two old people to despise her so blatantly.

Matteo turned toward Gladys and shot her a fake smile. "We won't eat unless Vivi eats too, Grand-aunt."

“That’s really thoughtless of you. Didn’t you see the girl wanted it too?” Roderick interjected tactfully and gave the whole plate of fruits to Vivian.

Gladys had no choice but to let Vivian have the peaches in the end.

The children had a hearty meal and played in the courtyard for a while before Frederick sent someone to pick them up.

The kids spent the night at Frederick’s and went to bed early.

It could have been an enjoyable and memorable day for the children if Matteo had not fallen sick in the middle of the night.

“What’s the matter? Why is he having a fever all of a sudden?” Frederick summoned the butler immediately when he was informed of Matteo’s situation.

“He probably caught a cold when he was playing in the afternoon. It’s no big deal. I’ll call the doctor over.”

Tim hurried to get the doctor after assuring his frantic master that everything was under control.

After the doctor arrived, he did a thorough check on Matteo and said it was no big deal.

“The boy just caught a cold, so there’s nothing you need to worry about, Mr. Hayes,” the doctor said, “I’ll prescribe him some medication and give him a jab.”

“That’s good news. Thanks.”

Frederick heaved a sigh of relief when he heard the doctor.

Ian and Vivian were awake too. They ran over to Matteo’s bedside when they found out he was sick.

Ian was especially agitated when he saw Matteo unwell. He was not just worried, he was pissed too.

“It must be them!”

Everyone in the room turned and stared at the angry boy.

“What are you talking about? Who made Matteo sick?”

“It must be that old witch. I know it must be them!”

Ian clenched his fists tightly as his breaths seethed with hatred. No one had expected so much negativity from a five-year-old.

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Frederick was shocked looking at Ian. “What are you talking about, Ian? Who wants to harm Matteo? Are you talking about your grand-uncle and grand-aunt?”

“Yes.”

Everyone in the room blinked their eyes in disbelief—not because Ian was able to express himself articulately—but because what he revealed was frightening.

“Ian, I know you don’t like your grand-uncle, but you can’t accuse them just like that. The doctor said that Matteo just caught a cold.”

There was no way Frederick would buy what the kid said, but he still tried to understand the boy.

“I know it’s them. I fell sick after I went to their place too!” Ian shouted back. He could not control his emotions anymore.

Tim stepped in and wanted to speak some sense into Ian, but Frederick quickly stopped him.

“Alright, Ian. I won’t let Matteo go over to Roderick’s place anymore, is that okay? It’s already late at night, why not you go back to bed?”

Ian glared at Frederick coldly and walked out with the butler.

Frederick did not believe a word Ian said. After all, he had had the whole incident checked the last time Ian fell sick. It was just pure coincidence. No one in the whole residence would believe what Ian said.

Frederick wondered if he should also do another investigation this time, but he did not translate that fleeting thought into actions.

When Sasha woke up again the next day, there was already no one beside her.

She looked around and felt the remaining warmth on her bed. Everything felt like a dream last night.

“Are you awake, Ms. Wand? Mr. Hayes asked us to make you some herbal soup.”

Wendy’s voice called Sasha back to reality.

Soup?

Sasha was not expecting Sebastian to be so nice.

“Alright. I’m coming.”

Sasha got out of bed and went to wash up in the bathroom.

She could not help but feel uneasy thinking about meeting Wendy again later since even she herself could not explain her relationship with Sebastian. Sasha was his children’s mother, but she and Sebastian were not on good terms.

Yet, despite their rocky relationship, she slept here last night.

When Sasha opened the room door after washing up, Wendy had already gone downstairs.

Sasha went to her own room on the second floor and got changed.

A flush of embarrassment rushed through her when she looked at the pajama she was wearing. Sebastian must have helped me change.

After having breakfast, Sasha asked Wendy where the children were. “All of them went to the Hayes residence? Even Vivi?” she asked worriedly.

“Yeah. Don’t worry, Ms. Wand. Mr. Hayes already called them this morning. They’re doing just fine.”

“Alright.”

Sasha was not disturbed about Matteo and Ian going over. It was Vivian that she worried about. Since the Hayes did not know about her real identity, they might mistreat her.

After getting the assurance that the children were having a good time there, Sasha grabbed her phone and went back up again.

It was already toward the end of the year. The blue sky was clear and the weather was blissful. Over at the hanging garden on the second floor, blue hydrangea and moth orchids blossomed under the warm sun as if they were in their prime. They danced to the breeze and their soothing scent wafted through the garden like a dream.

Sasha found herself a seat and fell into deep thoughts. Before long, she scrolled all the way down through her call log and called a number.

“Hello?”

Beep.

To her surprise, the person hung up right after the call got through without even giving her a chance to say more than just a simple ‘hello’.

Sasha felt the last strand of hope she was holding on to just snapped, but anger soon rose in her heart and she punched the call button again.

“What do you want, Sasha Wand?”

An impatient and spiteful female voice pierced through the phone.

“What do I want? It’s more like what do you want, Xenia Blackwood! Have you forgotten what you did to me? You’re not afraid of karma, aren’t you?”

“You must be kidding me, Sasha.” There was no fear in her voice. In fact, she was emboldened.

“There’s nothing I should be afraid of,” Xenia added.

“You stole my manuscripts and gave them to Xandra, didn’t you? You’re the only one who knows how I came out with the story for The Tattoo. You’re the only one who has a copy of it. It can’t be anybody else.”

Sasha sat in the garden shouting into her phone.

She was infuriated. Wrath glimmered in her bloodshot eyes. If Xenia were in front of her right now, she could rip her to pieces with her bare hands.

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“Are you crazy ? Don’t blame everything on me just because things went wrong for you. I don’t understand a word of what you’re talking about. I don’t even know what manuscript it is!” Xenia was not apologetic at all.

“Don’t lie. I know you know who Xandra Green is.”

“I’m sorry, but I really have no idea who she is. What’s wrong with you, huh? I know you’re having a hard time with the Hayes, but don’t blame it on me. I’ll still help you because you’re my cousin, but you’ll have to ask nicely instead of accusing me like this!”

Sasha could not believe Xenia would still try to play the good person at this point, but she calmed herself down and thought about what she said.

“Fine. Don’t say I didn’t give you a chance to admit what you did. I’ll make sure you pay for what you did to me. You will regret you’re born by then.”

Sasha vented all her hatred over the phone. She was never this aggressive toward Xenia because back then, she would still be polite toward her for the sake of Jackson and Sharon.

But, Xenia brought this on herself.

She took Sasha for a pushover ever since they were young. Xenia never once thought Sasha would take revenge on her.

You want to make me pay?

In your dreams, Sasha!

After ending the call, Sasha got ready to go out in the afternoon.

“Ms. Wand, are you sure you want to head out? It’s better for you to stay in until you recover. Mr. Hayes will be furious if he finds out.”

Sasha had no choice but to call Sebastian.

“Hey... Are you busy?”

Sasha was nervous calling him. She decided to ask if he was available before she continued talking.

He was usually busy at this hour.

Besides, it was almost new year already.

Sebastian glanced at the pile of documents on his table and put her on speaker before he continued working. “What is it?”

Sasha bit her lips and mustered her courage. “I need to go to Uncle Jackson’s place. I haven’t seen them for a while and it’s almost the new year now. It’ll be great if I visit them. They must really miss me after marrying me off.”

She thought of a random excuse.

Does this mean she thinks we’re still legally married?

A faint smile curved on Sebastian’s lips without even him noticing. “Sure. Ask Karl to send you over,” he said, signing his name on a document.

“It’s okay. I can drive there on my own. I’m thinking of going to buy some stuff for them. It’ll be inconvenient if Karl follows me around.”

The real reason why Sasha wanted to go over was not that she missed them, but rather, she wanted to give them a heads up because Xenia was their daughter.

After getting Sebastian's approval, Sasha hopped on the white Cayenne and drove off.

Karl was at Royal Court One as he watched Sasha drove away. He adjusted his earpiece. "Mr. Hayes, should I follow her?"

"Yes. Don't get spotted and don't get involved. Just make sure she's safe."

Sebastian stole a glance at the document file on the side of his table. Those were the information about Sasha's family before they went bankrupt. There was no anger on Sebastian's face. Instead, he looked calm and composed.

Has she finally figured out who betrayed her?

Good job.

Another smile broke out on his face before he dived into work again.

When Sasha reached the Blackwood residence, Jackson was out under the sun in the garden in his wheelchair. Sharon and the maids were busy cleaning and decorating the house.

"Dust that area, and I want the wallpaper changed over here."

"Yes, Mrs. Blackwood."

The maids hurried off to carry out the orders given.

Sasha came in and greeted her. "Aunt Sharon."

Sharon turned around and looked at her apathetically.

She never changed even the slightest bit. It did not matter how long she had not seen Sasha, nor what happened between them. Her attitude was always distant.

"Hi, Sasha."

"Can we talk in your room, Aunt Sharon?" Sasha was afraid she would not be able to take it, so she asked to talk to her privately.

The two went upstairs without letting Jackson know. For the first time in her life, Sasha saw horror in Sharon's eyes after Sasha filled her in on what happened.