

# The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 561- 570

“Wait. Mr. Hayes, I heard that your wife used to work in the finance industry. How about we let her in on this? Maybe she can offer us some insights and suggestions?”

Sasha was stunned. She didn’t expect anyone to stop her and invite her to join a meeting that seemed rather important.

Me? Joining them? How can that work? I am not a part of this company, and the projects Hayes Corporation invests in are valued at over ten billion. If I make a mistake, I will cause my husband to lose a fortune.

Sasha instinctively wanted to reject that offer.

Unfortunately, the man sitting behind the desk was amused and was smiling at her. He nodded and replied, “That sounds fantastic. Sasha, you can sit there.”

Sasha was speechless.

She had no choice but to shoot an angry glare at the guy before she walked over and sat beside the top managers.

The managers, however, handed her a thick proposal after she sat down.

“Here’s the gist of it, Mrs. Hayes. The company recently bought a piece of land in an auction.

The land is rather vast and we can build houses and apartments on it. Our problem is this if we build everything and its surroundings remain undeveloped, then the prices of real estate will be stagnant, and we won’t be able to attract many buyers.”

One of the managers gave Sasha the cliff’s note version of what was going on.

Projects like those were pretty common for a company like Hayes Corporation.

Yet, they asked me to stay here for the meeting. Why? Did they really encounter something they can’t solve? Or are they just curious about how brainy Mrs. Hayes actually is?

Sasha flipped through the thick documents she had with her. A moment later, she replied calmly, “This is not a good place to build a residential area at all.”

“Huh?” blurted someone. The top managers instantly looked surprised.

“Why would you think that, Mrs. Hayes?”

“That’s simple. The land is located in an old manufacturing district. The government may have made new plans to build more facilities in its surroundings; the previous facilities surrounding that piece of land were chemical factories.”

“So?”

“So it’s obvious, isn’t it? Those chemical factories had been operating for years, so the chemical waste had already polluted its surroundings. Who would live in a place like that? What do we do if something bad happens? Can the company afford to compensate everyone?”

All it took was a few words from Sasha to shut everyone up.

Most employees working there were aware of all that. However, it was impressive that Sasha, who had never worked in the office or learned anything about the project, made that discovery within a few minutes. They couldn't deny that Sasha was truly something else.

"Well then, what do you think we should do with this piece of land?"

"Let's do something commercial. We already have a lot of shopping malls in Avenport though, so we should look into importing foreign products to attract clients. Maybe something like duty-free outlet stores?"

"Huh?"

Those words truly shook the top managers to their cores. She actually suggested setting up duty-free outlet stores? My gosh, that brain of hers is truly something else.

We have been discussing the matter for so long, but we can't come up with any solution. I can't believe that Mrs. Hayes managed to solve this issue so quickly. Everyone started looking at Sasha differently.

"Mr. Hayes, your wife is truly incredible. I can't believe that we never thought of something like that. Also, who would've thought that we have an expert like this right under our noses?"

"Exactly. Mrs. Hayes, we heard that you used to work in the finance industry. Where are you working now?"

"Huh?"

Sasha was a little troubled, so she shot a look at the man sitting opposite of her. She didn't want to let others know that she used to work at Wall Street. They will probably skin me alive if they figure it out.

Sebastian raised his brows.

He had been enjoying the show from the side, but he stood up from his chair at that moment and walked over.

"If everyone's okay with it, then do as my wife suggested."

"What?" blurted Sasha, who was surprised once more.

Isn't that a little impulsive? All I did was share my opinion. They're going to spend billions on that one suggestion?

"Sebby, that's..."

"Yes, we're definitely okay with it. I think Mrs. Hayes' suggestion is amazing."

"I think so too, but I think we'll have to get some other large corporations to set up shop on our land. I heard that those corporations have high expectations, so there's no saying if they would do that," said another top manager, who pointed out the issue that came with that proposal.

Sasha has been listening on the side. She didn't even think about it before she blurted, "Why bother getting them to set up shop on our land? We can just collaborate with them and focus on getting them hooked. That will cause a slight delay before we get our profit, but it'll still be in our pockets eventually, right?"

No one spoke.

It was pin-drop silence.

The office became so quiet that it felt like someone had pushed the mute button and shut everyone up within a second.

Even Sebastian couldn't speak.

Sasha didn't know what to do about that.

Shoot, did I say something wrong? Was that too cruel? Yeah, I guess I was borderline conning the large corporations...

Sasha stood up right away and approached her husband carefully before saying, "Sebby, d-don't be mad, okay? I was just bullsh\*tting."

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Sebastian's eyes twitched.

After a while, he lowered his head and nudged Sasha's head. "What do you mean 'nonsense'? This is good!"

"Huh?"

"What are you guys standing around for? Sasha has already done all the brainstorming for you and you still don't know what to do?" he said in a disgusted tone, glaring around at the senior executives of the company who were still loitering in the office.

The senior executives immediately came to their senses. Their presence was no longer welcome. They picked up the plans spread out on the table and walked out of the office with their heads ducked in embarrassment.

Wow, Mrs. Hayes is really clever! What a smart woman!

After the senior executives had all left, a quiet peace descended over the office. Sasha was still standing at the head of the table, looking rather embarrassed.

"Sebby, earlier..."

"Why don't you just come and work for the company? We've just recently gone through a volatile time and most of our departments are understaffed... I think you're very suited to do investment planning," Sebastian blurted out suddenly.

He reached out a hand to gently tuck a stray strand of hair behind Sasha's ears.

Sasha was stunned into silence.

Work here? In this company? What about Wand Enterprise then? That's my own family's business. I've never considered working here. Wouldn't that be a bad idea? After all, I'm not just any other person; I'm his wife.

Sasha fretted to herself.

That was the difference between Sasha and those other women. Back then, Xandra had always hoped to use her relationship with Sebastian to attain a position in the company.

Roxanne, too, had always wanted to join the company.

Sasha was the only woman who was averse to becoming a part of the company.

“What’s wrong? You don’t want to work for the company? Sasha, this is a family business. You’re my wife; shouldn’t you help lighten my burdens? Do you want to see me get overworked and exhausted?”

Sebastian saw the reluctance on Sasha’s face and pouted. His handsome face became gloomy and he pulled his hand away from her unhappily.

Sasha was rendered speechless. Why is he acting like a child? His expression changed so quickly!

“No, no, that’s not what I meant. Listen to me. It’s not that I don’t want to help you out in the company. I’m just afraid that my presence here would reflect badly on you. After all, I’m not just any other person; I’m your wife.”

“What’s wrong with you being my wife? Can’t my wife work for me?”

Huh!

“Or are you unwilling to work under me? That’s not a problem! I’ll let you have my position in the company. I’m fine with that.”

He’s getting more and more outrageous! Sasha thought secretly to herself.

In the end, Sasha could not refuse him and she gave in to his request to join the company.

Little did she know that Sebastian had asked her to join the company because after he had hugged her, he could no longer smell the perfume.

He was happy as long as he did not smell it.

A man’s mind was sometimes just that simple.

Two days after that, Sasha started working at Hayes Corporation. The household affairs were handed over to Wendy and Sabrina.

What is the meaning of this? Am I, daughter of the Hayes family, not good enough for Hayes

Corporation? Did he forget that I used to be in charge of Hayes Corporation? Sabrina thought angrily to herself when she heard about the turn of events.

At that moment, her nephews and niece ran up to her and said comfortingly, “Aunt Sabrina, don’t be upset! Daddy asked you to stay home and look after us because he said this is the most important task!”

“Are you joking with me? Are the three of you rascals really the most important thing?”

“Of course not! The most important thing is Uncle Devin! Aunt Sabrina, let me tell you something. Today, I overheard Daddy talking as he was leaving for work. I heard him say that Uncle Devin will be coming over and he needs someone to receive him.”

My God! Sabrina’s eyes lit up when she heard the boy’s words.

Is Devin really coming over?

He really is the most important thing! Well, it seems my baby brother is treating me quite well. Who else would be home to receive him but me?

After that, she happily took her nephews and niece out to play.

Two hours later, the hospital called Sebastian.

“Mr. Hayes, would you be able to bring your mother in for an appointment today? I want

check the effects of her last treatment.”

“Today?” Sebastian frowned. Ever since Sasha started working in the company, it’s really difficult to handle any family affair that requires an adult to carry out!

Sebastian decided to take his mother to the hospital himself.

Frieda was happy to see Sebastian home again so soon. “Sebby! Here, have some candy.” Giving him candy was the only way she knew how to express her feelings.

Sebastian stretched out his slender fingers and gently plucked the candy from her palm.

“Mom, we are going to the hospital together today.”

“Okay, that sounds great! I’m going to the hospital with my Sebby!”

Frieda’s face lit up with joy. She happily danced into her room and returned with a little basket hanging on her arm. Then, she looked at Sebastian expectantly.

The little basket had once belonged to Vivian.

The two of them played a game of hide-and-seek. Vivian lost and she gave the basket to Frieda as a prize.

Sebastian looked at his mother. He was not quite sure what to feel.

He glanced at the basket. Then, he turned and merely said, “Let’s go.”

Frieda paused.

She seemed to be thinking hard about something. Then, she suddenly turned back into the house.

Sebastian was flabbergasted by her sudden action.

After waiting for a long while, Frieda reemerged again holding two pieces of cake wrapped in brown paper.

“Why are you bringing these with you? Are you afraid you’ll get hungry on the way there?”

“No, I’m bringing it for Sasha’s friend,” Frieda said casually. There was no clarity to be seen in her eyes.

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Sasha’s friend?

Sebastian did not mind her bringing the cakes along whatever her reasons were. He just casually asked, “Which friend is that? Have you met this friend before?”

“Yes, of course!” Frieda nodded vigorously. “We met at the hospital, but Sasha said we can’t

tell Sebby. So, be quiet about it, okay? You can’t tell Sebby about it either.”

She turned to Sebastian and solemnly put her finger to her lips.

Sebastian was speechless.

Doubt flashed across his eyes.

His mother suffered from a mental illness and her mind was often cloudy and unclear.

However, her mental illness has also caused her to be more child-like and straightforward in her words and actions.

Sebastian didn’t let the matter drop.

He had intended to take his mother straight to the psychiatric department once they reached the hospital. However, Frieda had other ideas. She quickly took off with the little basket in her arms as soon as they stepped into the hospital.

"Where are you going? Don't run off!"

Frieda ignored his cries and hurried down to the corridor where she had seen Sasha last. When she reached her destination, she did not find the person who had been with Sasha the other day.

"Huh? Where is he? Where did he go?" Frieda looked around the empty corridor helplessly. Her already cloudy mind became even more of a mess.

Sebastian had chased her down and he could not help but feel a little annoyed as he asked, "What are you doing? Who are you looking for?"

Frieda blinked her eyes and looked at him, full of innocence. "Sasha's friend! He was here the other day! He didn't have anything to eat. So, he held onto her and wouldn't let her go!" Frieda pointed down the corridor.

He held onto her?

Sebastian finally paid her words some attention. His face turned dark in an instant.

After that, they walked to the psychiatric department on the third floor of the hospital.

When Frieda's doctor saw that it was Sebastian himself who had brought his mother for her appointment, he was surprised. "Mr. Hayes! I'm surprised to see you here. Where's your wife?"

"She's busy!" Sebastian replied in a rather rude tone. His thoughts were still preoccupied with Frieda's words earlier.

When the doctor heard his tone, he did not dare to ask any further and immediately started attending to Frieda.

After he was done running tests on Frieda, the two of them walked out of the examination room to find Sebastian waiting outside. His expression was even grimmer than before.

Seeing this, the doctor started feeling even more flustered and nervous.

"Mr. Hayes, so... the hypnosis treatment that we had carried out on your mother previously seems to be working well. May I also enquire regarding the matter that I had spoken to you about before? How is that going on?"

"We couldn't find him!" Sebastian uttered in a rather huffy tone.

He had not dealt with that matter yet.

I don't know what's going on either! He had asked Luke to look into it, but he could find no information about his biological father in this city.

Although the Soprano family was not a prominent family, it was impossible that the second daughter of the Sopranos could get married and give birth to a son without leaving any trace.

Everything he knew was whatever tidbit of information that Frederick had told Wendy. His biological father was not from this city. He had married Frieda after he settled down

here. Unfortunately, he was met with a car accident and passed away, leaving behind his wife and a son. In the end, Sebastian was adopted by Frederick.

What a mess! The thought of the lack of information irritated Sebastian.

“Where is the security department of this hospital?”

“Huh?” The doctor was shocked by Sebastian’s sudden question. “S-security department? Mr. Hayes, why are you asking about the security department?”

“It’s none of your business! Just get me someone from the security department quick!”

Sebastian retorted loudly. He was already at his limit. Frieda, who was standing next to him, jumped in fright and clutched her basket closer to her.

Sebby is angry! What should I do? Did I do something wrong?

Frieda fretted to herself.

Officers from the security department and even the medical director hurried over nervously as soon as they had heard that Sebastian wanted to see them.

However, what frightened them, even more, was the fact that Sebastian paid them no heed at all, and instead, he had immediately pulled the head of the security department into the consultation room.

Boom!

The door slammed shut behind them.

Everyone left outside exchanged worried looks.

It was not until a while later when they saw officers from the security department going into the consultation room with a large stack of the CCTV records that they began to understand what was going on.

Over at the company’s offices, Sasha was having a rather busy day.

She had been put in charge of the company’s planning and operations department. There were so many things for her to look into and then, to plan and organize. It was impossible for her to not be busy.

“Ms. Wand, we’ve just received this hotel auction invitation. Should the company participate?”

“Hotel auction?”

Sasha, who had just finished sorting out the business plan of the company for the next three months, glanced at the proposal that her subordinate had laid down in front and felt her headache return.

Does the company really have so much money? Do we need to take part in everything? I should have a department meeting about this first.

“Listen, why don’t we have a quick department meeting in ten minutes? Go and inform everyone.”

“Sure, Ms. Wand,” the employee answered as he picked up his proposal brief and went off to notify his colleagues.

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Ten minutes later, the entire investment planning department was gathered in a small meeting room.

“What do you guys think she’s trying to do here? All the proposals that I have sent to her in

the past two days have all been shot down!”

“Yeah! Mine too! Does she even know anything about investment? If she won’t approve any investment projects, then how is the company going to make any profits?”

“Shh! Keep your voice down! Don’t forget she’s the boss’ wife!”

In that one little remark, the employee had summed up the entire reason for Sasha’s presence in the company.

Nobody would believe that Sasha, the president’s wife, had landed in such an important role on her own merits. Even Sasha herself would not have believed it.

Sasha entered the meeting room and saw the doubtful expression on her subordinates’ faces. Geez, I am sure they have lots of fun bit\*hing about me.

However, she didn’t seem to be affected at all.

“Everybody, I’m sorry to interrupt your work. I’m holding this short meeting today just to make one announcement. Going forward, please do not propose any more investment projects that will bring in less than one billion in profit to Hayes Corporation. I will not be accepting those,” Sasha said simply as she stared unapologetically into the eyes of everyone in the room. This was the first rule that she had laid down after taking office.

Then, as if to emphasize her point, she unceremoniously tossed a stack of proposals that she had sorted out earlier into the wastepaper basket.

After she was done speaking, the meeting room burst into an uproar.

“At least one billion? Ms. Wand, you must be joking! Do you know how much money that is?”

“Yeah, Ms. Wand, d-don’t you think you’ve set the bar too high? If that’s your criteria, then we

wouldn’t dare to invest anymore! Who would dare to cooperate with us after if this is your requirement?”

“That’s true. Ms. Wand, do you want to discuss this with the previous head of department first?”

Everyone in the department could not help voicing out their dissatisfaction.

They complained that Sasha’s goal was too high and implied that she did not know what she was doing. Their faces were full of contempt and disdain towards her.

They even dared to suggest that she consult the previous head of department.

Sasha stared at them coldly.

She waited until they were done speaking and the meeting room was silent again before saying, “Hayes Corporation has a total net asset of 800 billion after deducting all operating costs. The company must make at least 50 billion each year for it to be considered profitable. How can your investments with profits of a few million each make any kind of meaningful contribution to the company? Are the lot of you just playing around?”

The meeting room was deathly quiet after Sasha had spoken. Everyone was too embarrassed to say anything further.

Sasha smiled wryly and continued, “If you, as an employee of a company with 800 billion in



assets, are unable to secure investment proposal, then I don't think you deserve to be here. You are not up to the company's standards. Please shape up or move to those companies that have lower expectations, okay?"

Sasha's tone was sharp and strict, leaving no space for any more arguments.

She was skilled at managing people.

Back when she was working in Andy's company at Wall Street, she was in charge of a team with dozens of people under her. Her team was all highly capable people. They only talked about investments in the billions.

And these useless bunch of people? They should be honored to be working under me!

Sasha stared around at her team's pale, fearful faces. Then, she flicked away the pen that she had been holding, stood up and returned to her office without saying another word.

For the rest of the morning, no one dared to disturb her peace with any more trivial projects. At twelve o'clock, Sasha shut down her computer.

"Ms. Wand, are you going upstairs to cook lunch for the president now?"

"Yes."

Sasha was a little embarrassed to speak about her private life. She cast a quick glance at her assistant and hurried off.

For the past two days, Sasha had indeed been cooking at the penthouse suite on the top floor of the building.

It was too far for her to travel back to the Hayes residence from the company.

Further, Sebastian also rarely left work on time or had meetings and entertain clients. It was just more convenient for the two of them.

So, Sasha had simply stocked the penthouse suite with groceries. The penthouse was equipped with a full set of kitchen equipment and items anyway.

Sasha stepped into the elevator.

"Mrs. Hayes, are you done with work?"

"Yes, where's the president? Is he back?" Sasha glanced around.

"He was back earlier but he left again. He should be meeting a client," the receptionist answered after glancing over at the meeting room.

Since Sebastian was busy, there was no need for Sasha to wait for him.

She went up to the top floor and began to cook.

She was done within half an hour, but Sebastian had not come up to the penthouse yet.

She

did not bother to go and get him. Instead, she started to clean up the suite so that he would feel more comfortable later when he came up.

However, even after she was done cleaning, Sebastian still had not appeared.

What's happening down there? He's still not done?

Sasha finally got impatient and decided to go down to check up on him.

"Josephine, where's the president? He's still in his meeting?"

"Huh?" The receptionist was surprised. "He's already done! He didn't go upstairs for lunch?"

Sasha immediately pulled out her phone and dialed his number.

He answered very quickly. "Hello?"

"Sebby, where are you? I've already prepared lunch. Are you not eating?" Sasha whined into the phone.

She was getting a little hungry waiting for him.

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She was baffled by the hint of aloofness in his tone.

"Go ahead and eat first. I still have some matters to deal with."

With that, he promptly hung up and left Sasha perplexed.

What the heck? Did this bast\*rd just hang up on me? It's fine that he didn't bother to inform me about his dinner plans. But hanging up on me? Pfft.

Sasha's frustration was building up.

Nonetheless, she was not a child. After her initial annoyance wore off, she quietly headed back to the penthouse suite and ate alone.

He's the President. I'm sure he's got lots on his plate. Eating would be the last thing on his mind.

Sasha proceeded to tidy up the kitchen before resting for a while. Then, she headed back to the operational department for work.

"Did you guys see that? This afternoon, Mr. Hayes brought clients out for lunch but he didn't even bring her along."

"Yeah, I saw."

"What's going on? Isn't she his wife? Why didn't she tag along for lunch?"

"So what if she's his wife? I heard that she went upstairs to prepare lunch for him, only to realize that he has already gone out with clients."

Upon her arrival, Sasha could already hear the hushed whispers of people gossiping about her.

Those were obviously people who reveled in gloating over others' misfortunes, especially since they were aware that she had made lunch for him.

She entered the office betraying no emotion.

That was precisely the reason why she hated working there. Despite the fact that she was the president's wife, many people still felt disgruntled towards her.

She knew that they felt she was too ordinary. On the other hand, he was an exceptionally talented individual. They obviously think she was not good enough for him.

To avoid those demoralizing thoughts, Sasha began to bury herself in work.

At the Imperial Villa, Sebastian was clad in sportswear and furiously swinging the golf club. White golf balls flew one after another because of his unrestrained strokes.

Jake observed him from the side and commented, "Did he get up from the wrong side of the bed today? At this rate, the balls are going to be smashed to pieces.

A speechless Shawn watched on with a stupefied expression plastered on his face.

Devin stood there with his eyebrows furrowed. After a while, he picked up his golf club and walked over.

"What's wrong? I can sense fury emitting from within you. Who pissed you off?"

No one answered.

The only sound that ensued was a deafening thud that came from yet another forceful hit.

That is some temper...

Devin took his place beside the golf balls and positioned himself with the golf club in hand.

"I heard you're investigating your birth father. How's it going? Still no news? Do you need my

help?"

"Save it."

His instantaneous reply came as a surprise.

However, it was evident that Sebastian was still outraged.

Devin smiled wryly.

A few moments later, he finished his load of golf balls. He then strolled to grab a bottle of water and appeared next to Sebastian.

"Why don't you let me help you out? I'll be returning to the base soon."

"That soon?"

His words finally prompted Sebastian's frenzy to come to a halt.

Devin nodded and explained, "I only returned this time around because of my grandpa's condition, not because it's our time off. Once I'm all done here, I've got to get back to the base."

"Oh yes, that reminds me. I've been so preoccupied with other matters that I forgot to inquire about him. How's he now? Feeling better?"

When his friend's grandfather finally came to mind, Sebastian sheepishly probed.

Chuckling, Devin replied, "It's nothing major, actually. Just his chronic illness making its yearly round. He usually feels the loss of my uncle even more around this time of the year and falls sick. Although, I'm not too sure why that happens."

While Devin mostly looked helpless at the situation, his eyes betrayed traces of exasperation.

That news came as a shock to Sebastian.

Regarding the Jadesons, he had heard a rumor or two. He had also caught wind of the deceased uncle his friend was talking about.

However, he recalled that Devin once mentioned that his uncle was considered taboo in the family.

If that was the case, why does old Mr. Jadeson still fall ill because of him? On top of that, it's

an annual occurrence?

Sebastian's interest was piqued.

“What happened to your uncle? I thought you told us your grandpa wasn’t very fond of him.”

“Yeah. That unfilial jack\*ss.”

Devin crudely remarked.

Sebastian fell silent with a grim expression on his face.

To describe one’s own child using such coarse language rendered Sebastian speechless.

“What do you mean by that? So anyone who refuses to be dictated by your family is considered an unfilial jack\*ss? Well, I think your uncle wasn’t at fault in the slightest bit. If it were me, I’d be willing to destroy a crown just to live my own life. What’s more a medal?”

Right at that moment, Jake and Shawn joined the pair.

When they heard the conversation topic, Jake instantly chimed in.

His abrupt interruption left Devin at a loss for words.

Before he could say anything, Shawn hurriedly kneeed Jake’s shin.

“Hey! What was that for? Are you courting death?”

“You know nobody would take you for a mute even if you stay silent, right?”

Shawn reprimanded him while giving him a menacing glare.

What a rare sight to see calm and collected Shawn lash out at others.

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Sebastian was riveted by the commotion.

Medal?

He had never seen something like that.

Nevertheless, he knew that a token like that was significant to a family with a military background.

Medals like that were allegedly only presented to those who managed to accomplish magnificent feats. In addition, the possession of such medals would elevate the family’s standing.

They might as well be considered as distinguished members of royalty.

Alas, the Jadesons’ second son may have ruined it all for them.

Sebastian also could not fathom Devin’s uncle’s choices. “But why did he do that? A medal is symbolic of your family’s esteemed prestige. Were he and your grandfather at odds?”

Instead of outrightly berating his uncle, Sebastian chose to pose his questions from a neutral standpoint.

Maybe it was because of his own upbringing.

After all, he himself had gone against Frederick’s wishes many a time in his youth.

Devin nodded in response to his question. “I think he wasn’t fond of having his life set out for him. As the family’s heir, from a military background at that, there were many matters

that were forced upon him. For instance, his marriage and his job.”

“If that was the case, that I think his rebellion wasn’t unorthodox. Although, I have to agree that he shouldn’t have destroyed your family’s medal.”

“Yeah. That’s precisely why my grandpa was fuming mad. According to what I heard, the state was so displeased that they issued my grandpa a harsh warning and recorded the incident as a major offense. My grandpa was so incensed that he didn’t even bother to take a look at him when my uncle passed on.”

As Devin lamented the Jadesons’ tragic past, the atmosphere was somber.

In actual fact, Shin’s name was still forbidden in the Jadesons’ household.

They had high hopes for Shin, yet he forsook the Jadesons for a woman and resulted in the humiliation of their family name in Jadeborough. They absolutely detested him.

He was supposed to be the elite of their family, but that woman ruined it all for him.

It was impossible for them to ever forgive him or accept him as a Jadeson once more.

At his friend’s reply, Sebastian heaved a heavy sigh.

“Then, I doubt your grandfather’s illness is a result of his longing for your uncle. It’s more likely an eruption of his pent-up anger all these years.”

“I think so too,” Devin muttered with amusement.

As they carried on chatting, Sebastian’s mood gradually lifted. The band of friends finished up their final game before a call from the office came. Then, Sebastian got ready to head back.

“The situation at your company just stabilized, so you’ve got to remember not to be too hasty and always discuss with others when making decisions. Also, don’t bury your feelings. Got it?”

As the eldest in the group, Devin made it a point to offer Sebastian some advice before he left.

When Jake heard his words, he interjected with jest. “He’s right, Sebastian. I heard you even

got your wife to work there. How impressive! You could always talk things out with her.

Apparently, she’s extremely competent.”

“Shut up!”

It was supposed to be friendly banter, but Sebastian’s face instantaneously darkened at Jake’s comment.

Jake and Devin froze at once.

Shawn, who remained quiet at the side, turned to eye Sebastian.

They understood the situation right away.

Sebastian’s foul mood was obviously because of the tiff with his wife.

Even after Sasha was done with the day’s work, she did not see Sebastian return to the office.

However, it barely bothered her.

His position as the president entailed countless responsibilities. It was not unusual for him

to knock off work late.

Sasha continued to tidy her table.

Buzz... Buzz... Buzz...

"Hello?"

"Mommy, have you gotten off work? We're at the mall with Aunt Sabrina. Come quick!

We're

having ice cream right now."

The call came from Vivian. The kids were at a nearby shopping mall and urged her to join them.

Sabrina brought them here?

The thought of seeing her children put her in a cheery mood and she promptly left the office.

When she arrived at the mall a stone's throw away from their office, she spotted her children

riding a carousel while holding their ice creams.

Where's Sabrina? Oh god. Look at her at the claw machine by herself.

"What the hell? What is this broken contraption? It's obviously out to eat my money!"

Having failed at the claw machine multiple times, Sabrina raised her leg and gave it a hard kick. She indignantly threw a fit as she carried on striking the machine with her foot.

Sasha shook her head at her behavior and headed straight for her children.

"Matt! Vivi! Are you having ice cream?"

"That's right, Mommy. You're finally here! Here you go. This is for you."

As a little girl, Vivian had always been the most affectionate of them all. When she spotted her mother, she immediately hopped off the carousel and ran over to her with her arms spread wide open.

Sasha quickly bent down and picked her up.

Matteo followed behind his sister but merely held his mother's hand. "Mommy, are you fatigued from work? Did Daddy give you lots of work to do?"

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"Haha!" Sasha burst into laughter at her son's guileless innocence.

"Why? Are you concerned that Daddy will overtake Mommy?"

"Yeah! Everyone says that working for Daddy is exhausting, even Mr. Scott. So you've got to

let me know if Daddy's overtaxing you. Then, we won't work for him anymore!"

"Huh?" Sasha's eyes widened in disbelief. "Then what else can we do?"

"Anything's fine. Our Mommy's a jack of all trades. You can either start your own business or

you can work at the hospital. The possibilities are endless!"

The little rascal's not giving his own Daddy any credit!

Luckily, Ian showed up.

Upon hearing his brother spout nonsense, he reached out to shove his ice cream into his mouth.

“Mmhmm...”

“Little Ian?”

“Mommy, where’s Daddy? Is he not with you?” Ian obediently strode over to his Mommy and leaned into her embrace.

Sasha’s heart melted at his affection.

As she snuggled up to her three children, she grinned from ear to ear. “No, he’s still busy with work. How’s about this? We’ll go and get some ingredients first. Then, we’ll give him a call. Perhaps he would be done by then.”

“Sure!”

The three kids happily obeyed.

Hence, the four of them made their way towards the supermarket.

Sabrina, who was still preoccupied with the claw machine, had no clue that they were leaving until Ian turned around and noticed his oblivious aunt. He spun around and marched in her direction to drag her along with them.

“Hey! What are you doing? I’m not done with this!”

She furiously pointed towards the doll inside the claw machine.

Ian sneered as he continued yanking her along. “Only a brainless person would play this.”

Sabrina was left without retort.

The nerve of this rascal!

In the end, Sabrina was dragged along to the supermarket against her will.

At the sight of Sabrina, Sasha felt a tad apologetic about troubling her with the children.

She swiftly pointed to a chicken in the poultry section and asked, “Sabrina, how about I prepare some chicken soup for you tonight?”

Sabrina’s eyes bulged in disbelief. “What for? I’m not ill.”

Sasha resisted the urge to chuckle. “Nobody said that chicken soup is only for those who are sick. It can be nourishing even if you’re perfectly fine. I’m a doctor, remember?”

Sabrina’s eyes instantly lit up.

I suppose it doesn’t hurt to drink something nutritious to look healthier. I’ve been planning to go see Devin anyway. He doesn’t like it when my face is covered with layers of makeup. If I looked like I was in the pink of health, I wouldn’t need all that makeup to go meet him.

At the thought of that, Sabrina enthusiastically nodded. “I want two servings!”

Sasha was struck dumb upon hearing that.

Alright. Guess I’ll have to make more.

With the children in tow, the pair of women quickly finished their grocery shopping and left the supermarket.

“Mommy, are we calling Daddy?” The moment they left, Matteo asked.

Sasha was about to open her mouth to answer when Sabrina piped up. “What for? Isn’t he right there?”

Huh?

The children's heads immediately shot up.  
Sasha also turned to look in the direction Sabrina pointed to.  
Indeed, as they stood at the grand entrance of the mall, they spotted a familiar black Bentley driving over from the direction of the office.  
"It's Daddy!"  
The kids were overjoyed at the sight of their father's car and began prancing in excitement.

Sasha was also feeling gratified by his unexpected appearance. She fished out her phone and dialed his number to tell him that his wife and children were there at the shopping mall he was approaching.  
"Hello? Sebby, we're at..."  
"You can go home first. I still have unfinished business at the office. No need to wait for me to have dinner."  
With a terse statement like that, he rapidly hung up without waiting for Sasha to reply.  
At the same time, the animated children were eagerly awaiting their father's arrival, only to see his car speed past them.  
"Daddy! Why didn't he stop? Did he not see his sweetie?"  
Vivian's lips curled into a pout as tears lined her red-rimmed eyes at the sight of her Daddy's car zooming past her.  
Both Matteo's and Ian's faces fell simultaneously. The former, usually the most anxious of the trio, rushed to his mom's side.  
"Mommy, did you not manage to get through to Daddy's line? Why didn't he stop for us?"  
Sasha forced out a faint smile to her son with her phone still clenched tightly in her fist.  
"Daddy was on his way to fetch his client. He's not done with work for today."  
"Is that so?"  
Matteo scrutinized his mother with a tinge of suspicion.  
Sasha bent down at once to hold him in her arms. "Of course! When has Mommy ever lied to you? Besides, Daddy loves you three so much. If he really knew you were here, wouldn't he fly over if he were available?"

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Sasha acted calm so that her kids would believe her.  
After Sasha coaxed them, they stopped kicking a fuss and followed her into the car.  
However, Ian frowned and gazed at Sasha before he hopped in.  
Forty minutes later, they returned to the Hayes residence.



“Sasha, are you sure your man left to meet a client? Could it be that he has abandoned you?”

“Ah?”

Sabrina asked Sasha mockingly when Sasha wanted to open the door and take the vegetables. Instantly, Sasha’s face turned pale.

“Of course! What are you asking this? How could he possibly abandon us?” She avoided Sabrina’s gaze and denied her speculation.

Sabrina noticed the change in Sasha’s expression and stopped dwelling on it.

Instead, she stared and sneered at Sasha coldly before entering the house.

Sasha felt relieved once Sabrina left. Her hands suddenly went limp, and the things that she held fell into the car.

Deep down, Sasha was unsure if he abandoned her and the kids there.

However, he said clearly over the phone that he was busy working in the company.

Besides,

he asked Sasha to go home and have dinner first.

Why did he have to lie?

He was neither in the company nor busy doing anything.

Suddenly, Sasha recalled that she was being stood up during lunch.

“Madam, you’re back.”

“Yes. You don’t have to prepare dinner for Mr. Hayes because he’s busy,” Sasha said while carrying the vegetables.

Meanwhile, Wendy was unaware of what went on.

She only nodded smilingly and grabbed the vegetables into the kitchen to prepare dinner.

Expectedly, Sebastian didn’t come home for dinner at night.

After tucking the kids in, Sasha returned to the bedroom and lay in bed. At that time, she finally heard some footsteps outside the room.

“Sebby, are you home?” Sasha asked instinctively.

She half-opened her eyes and saw a man entering the room.

“Yes,” the man replied calmly.

Sasha somehow felt that the familiar voice sounded raspy.

Has he caught a cold, or did he drink?

As the thought flashed through her mind, Sasha was instantly wide awake.

When she wanted to switch on the light, Sebastian had fumbled his way into the bathroom.

After a while, she heard that the tap was running.

Well, I’ll wait until he finishes taking a shower.

Sasha turned on the table lamp and wanted to wait for him.

After twenty minutes or so, Sasha heard that he had finally turned off the tap. Feeling happy,

she lifted the blanket and stood up.

“Sebby, are you done?”

“You are still awake?”

As Sebastian came out from the bathroom, some water droplets on his shapely torso glistened in the light.

Stunned, Sasha gulped and forced herself to calm down.

“Yes, I am. Sebby, are you having a fever? I heard that your voice sounded raspy just now. Let me take a look.”

She reached out her hand to examine him.

Sebastian always wished that Sasha would lay her hands on him. However, when Sasha was

reaching out, Sebastian avoided her with a look of disgust.

Sasha was rendered speechless, and her hand stopped halfway.

She was rooted to the floor for quite some time.

Is he... avoiding me?

Besides, why did he flash a look at me?

At that moment, a shiver ran down her spine.

“I feel alright. I only drank a little with the clients. Go and sleep.”

Sebastian clenched his fists and suppressed his anger.

After withdrawing his gaze from her, Sebastian grabbed the hairdryer from the wardrobe and

got into the bathroom again.

Sasha couldn't hear any sound from the bathroom since then.

Meanwhile, Sebastian was very agitated as he had forced himself to stay calm for the whole day. However, he felt outraged whenever he recalled what he saw from the surveillance footage.

Just why?

After all the ups and downs that we've gone through, why hasn't she forgotten that man?

Lies and deceptions...

She even made me drunk and begged me afterward so that I would agree to her request.

How much does she miss that man? How heartbroken will she be if he dies in my hands?

All

the more so, she even let him touch her!

Thud!

Sebastian hit the wall forcefully and left a red mark.

Nonetheless, Sasha didn't hear anything because the hairdryer was so loud while the door was closed.

Moreover, her mind was in turmoil because she was thinking of the look of disgust on Sebastian's face.

After a while, she switched off the light and buried herself under the blanket. Slowly, tears streamed down her face.

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It was a sleepless night for Sasha.

The next morning, she felt dizzy.

She didn't get up nor open her eyes. Instead, she pretended to be sleeping, for she wanted to see Sebastian's response.

Even though Sasha was still asleep, Sebastian would always hug and kiss her before he got up.

What about this morning?

Sasha held her breath and waited.

The outcome was disappointing—Sebastian lifted the blanket and got up once he woke up.

Then, he quickly changed his clothes and left the room without even glancing at Sasha.

What is going on?

Once the door was closed, Sasha couldn't stop the tears from sliding down her face.

It was cold in the middle of winter, but Sasha felt that her heart had frozen.

She kept lying on the bed for a long time.

"Sasha? Sasha?"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

When she heard the bang on the door, Sasha quickly wiped away her tears and got up.

"Mom? Why are you up so early?"

Sasha gazed at Frieda in bewilderment, for Frieda was supposed to be asleep at this hour.

Frieda grabbed Sasha's arm and said, "I want to have chicken soup as well."

Chicken soup?

Is she referring to the chicken soup made for Sabrina yesterday? Didn't she have the soup last night?

Sasha shrugged and explained, "Mom, we ate all the chicken soup last night. If you want more, I'll buy the ingredients and make the soup for you."

"There is still some soup. That fierce woman—she hid the soup. I saw it, but she didn't want me to have it. She's a bad woman!"

Hugging Sasha's arms, Frieda began to sob.

Sasha got anxious instantly.

She put on a jacket on Frieda and brought her to Sabrina's room.

Much to her surprise, Sasha saw a pot of chicken soup in Sabrina's room once she arrived.

"Sabrina, what are you doing? Why are you keeping so much chicken soup? Can you finish all of it?"

"It's none of your business! Since you made the soup for me, I can decide if I want to gulp it down or otherwise," Sabrina retorted.

Sasha felt that she almost went crazy because of the two women.

Besides, she felt even more agitated after facing the fiasco.

She had no choice but to drive to the market early in the morning to buy a chicken to make some soup before going to the company.

“Mom, I’m cooking the chicken soup now. Later, you can ask Wendy to get a bowl for you. Be good and stick around the house.”  
“Okay.”

Delighted, Frieda nodded and squatted near the stove quietly.  
After that, Sasha departed to Hayes Corporation in the city center.

“Ms. Wand, you’re late. The representative of Wells International called us and asked to discuss our partnership through video conferencing. Since you weren’t here, he called Mr. Hayes directly.”

Sasha never thought that Jenny would tell her such a piece of bad news once she arrived. Wells International was the duty-free retailing group mentioned by Sasha when she discussed the land lot with the higher-ups in the president’s office.

Aren’t they still hesitating? Why did they suddenly request to have video conferencing to talk

about partnership?

Feeling nervous, Sasha dialed a number once she sat down.

“Hello? Sebby... Mr. Hayes, sorry for bothering you. I just arrived at the office and heard that

Wells International called you. May I know what he said?”

“How can you have the cheek to ask this question? As the director of the operational department, how could you let our customer call my office? What have you been doing? Is this how you’re supposed to work?” Sebastian scolded angrily.

Sasha felt that Sebastian didn’t respect her like how a superior was supposed to treat a subordinate.

Besides, his tone was devoid of emotion, as though he was a completely different man. Instantly, tears slid down her face uncontrollably.

Did I ask to work here?

He forced me to be here!

Indignant, Sasha had the impulse to fling the phone away and leave the company.

However, as a well-mannered woman with high professional ethics, she told herself not to do it.

Hence, she resisted her feelings and said in a low voice, “I’m sorry that I didn’t do it well. I’ll take care of it.”

With that, she hung up the phone.

Holding the phone, Sebastian was rooted to the floor.

Bang! A few seconds later, he flung the phone on the table.

Luke witnessed it as he was in Sebastian’s office. After hesitating for a while, he persuaded, “Mr. Hayes, don’t you think you’re too harsh to Mrs. Hayes? I mean, she has only started working in the company for a few days, yet you-”

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“Are you trying to lecture me? Get out of here!”

Before Luke could finish, Sebastian vented his anger by flinging all of the documents at him. Well, he got furious yesterday, and the whole company has been rendered chaotic because of that.

Huh, I hope Mrs. Hayes won't be irritated by him.

That was Luke's only hope when he got out of the room.

In the operational department downstairs, Sasha didn't have time to be angry, for she had to

persuade Wells International to come back.

“Jenny, please tell all colleagues to go to the meeting room. I'd like to have an emergency meeting in a short while.”

“Understood, Ms. Wand.”

The secretary immediately told everyone about it.

A few minutes later, everyone in the department was seated in the small meeting room.

Besides, their expressions were different from yesterday.

Those who either obeyed Sasha during the meeting yesterday or had a wait-and-see attitude

were interested to know how she would respond to the emergency.

Moreover, those who were reluctant to acknowledge Sasha's leadership hoped she would make a fool out of herself.

“Everyone, we are encountering some problems with one of the most important projects due to my mistakes. Hence, we have to turn the tide now. From now on, please stop whatever you're working on currently and do as I instruct!”

Once Sasha entered the meeting room, she didn't sit down but began giving instructions straightforwardly. Besides, she kept knocking on the table with a pen while talking.

Perhaps only a few women could act as imposingly as Sasha.

Instantly, those who recognized Sasha's leadership answered affirmatively, “Understood, Ms.

Wand.”

“Ms. Wand, since our projects are also urgent, how can all of us stop? I mean, we're about to

give our clients a call later to inform them about our progress. What if we lose the clients as a result of putting a halt to our work?” Soon, one of those who wanted to create trouble said sarcastically.

Surprisingly, Sasha cast a cold glance at him and argued, “Who's the director, me or you? How dare you talk nonsense when I specifically ask you to stop? As for your clients, I don't care even if ten similar clients cancel their orders!”

She said in an authoritative tone and didn't intend to show him any respect.

The staff's face reddened as though he had been slapped in the face. Despite his dissatisfaction, he dared not utter a word anymore.

At the end of the meeting, it was decided that the entire department stopped whatever they were working on currently.

Some were in charge of contacting Wells International; the rest were tasked with monitoring the company.

Moreover, Sasha also asked someone to track the whereabouts of Wells International's representative. She wanted to know where the representative was and met him directly. Upon hearing that, Jenny was rooted to the floor. "Ms. Wand, are you sure you want to do it by yourself? How are you going to do it? I mean, it's dangerous to go out because it's snowing now."

"It's fine. Why should I worry about snow? I encountered weathers that were a lot worse before."

Unperturbed, Sasha continued to stare at the website that could track the whereabouts of Wells International's representative.

After going through ups and downs all these years, Sasha had transformed herself from the pampered Ms. Wand to a formidable woman.

Furthermore, she had to be strong, or Sebastian would think that she was useless.

Perhaps he'll scold me with a lot more unpleasant words if I'm useless to him.

Recalling the moment she called Sebastian just now, Sasha parted her lips for a while and continued to concentrate on the website.

Fortunately, the hacker whom Sasha hired found the representative's location and gave it to her.

"The target is in Horington."

"Horington?"

Sasha's eyes glowed upon hearing it.

Horington wasn't very far from Avenport, and she could drive to the city within four hours.

As such, Sasha thought she could stop the representative if she departed immediately.

With that, she grabbed her bag on the table and was about to make a move.

Jenny was anxious and wanted to stop Sasha. However, Sasha was very strong-willed even

though she and Jenny were around the same age.

Sasha stood at her office door and said, "Everyone, I know that you feel reluctant to work on this project. However, it is about a plot of land worth ten billion; hence, it is a rare but immensely profitable business opportunity for the company. If we get the project and double its value, your names will be included in the top employees' award. By then, you will acquire both fame and fortune. In that case, why should anyone think about giving up on the project?"

Upon hearing it, none of them uttered a word.

Instead, they stopped their work and gazed at Sasha quietly.

After Sasha left, they came back to their senses and felt excited all of a sudden.

A few seconds was all it took to get everyone to feel passionate about their work.

Sasha went straight to the parking area once she got downstairs.

“That’s weird. Did you guys see that? I think the woman who came to our company was Ms. Roche.”

“Are you sure? Where did you see her?”

“When I was parking my car, I saw her car next to mine.”