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## The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 41 - 45

“Ms. Nancy, what do you think of my gloves? Do they look nice?” “Yes, they are lovely!” Sasha was carefully peeling off prawn shells with her head lowered. When her son asked for her opinion, she instinctively glanced at his little hands. However, all it took was one glimpse to make her heart wrench in pain as she recalled the scene when she first stepped into the villa. “This pair of gloves is from Ms. Xandra. She told me that she knitted it herself.” Upon hearing his mommy’s compliment, Matteo let her have a closer look at his gloves. Sasha was at a loss for words. *She knitted the gloves by herself?*

*This pair of gloves doesn’t look hand-knitted at all. It is impossible for the stitches of hand-knitted gloves to be so perfect without any variances. Besides, instead of having the colorful crystals added to the gloves with separate stitches, a person who knows how to knit will use the same wool to combine all the crystals so that the stitches will appear nicer and more natural. How can this pair of gloves be hand-knitted?* Sasha was pretty sure that Xandra did not knit the gloves herself, so she sneered, “Obviously, these gloves are not hand-knitted. The knot of hand-knitted gloves should not look like this.”

“Really?” The little boy raised his voice in confusion. The dining room was blanketed with total silence almost instantly. In a blink of an eye, Xandra’s expression changed. “What do you mean? How can you say that the gloves are not hand-knitted? Sasha Wand, do you know how to knit?” Sebastian raised the question at once. For some unknown reason, he did not wish to see Sasha’s words turn into reality. Nonetheless, Sasha glanced at him with disdain and jeered, “Of course I do! I knit for... myself all the time. See? I knitted this top myself!” Sasha purposely tugged at her knitted top in front of everyone.

Immediately, the dining room became silent again. *Is the show finally about to start?* As Sasha slowly sat down again, she caught a glimpse of everyone in the dining room. The changes in their facial expressions were just like the four seasons. Seeing Xandra’s pale face, Sasha finally cheered up a little. She suddenly had the appetite to enjoy the food on the dining table. “I don’t want this pair of gloves anymore. Daddy, Ms. Xandra did not knit the gloves by herself. Take them back, you liar!” Matteo also played his part well. Upon hearing his mommy’s words, he immediately removed the gloves from his little hands and tossed them at the woman seated opposite them. Xandra’s face had turned as pale as a sheet by then. “It’s not like that, Sebastian. L-Let me explain, these gloves... I personally bought the wool and the colorful crystals, then asked someone to knit the gloves.

I j-just didn’t know how to knit, but the materials were all chosen by me!” “Yet, you had the audacity to tell me that you knitted it yourself. You’re a liar! I won’t trust you anymore!”

Matteo yelled again. This time, he seemed even more infuriated. He flung the cutlery in his

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hands to the ground and was about to jump down from the chair. Sasha stopped him at once and tried to pacify him, "Little Ian, don't be angry. Since she doesn't know how to knit, how about I do it instead? Just tell me what you like. I will knit for you, alright?" "Really?" Matteo lifted his head and looked at his mommy with teary eyes.

He was obviously really upset and disappointed. At the sight of his son's pitiful expression, Sasha's heart ached. She hugged her son tightly and murmured into his ear, "I promise to knit for you. Trust me. I will get it done for you within two days." Sebastian was speechless as his anger rose to a higher level. He was about to lash out at Sasha again when Xandra lunged toward him abruptly. *Thump!* She knelt on the floor, wrapping her arms around his legs. "Sebastian, please listen to me. I didn't do it on purpose. I really intended to knit the gloves myself in the beginning, but I've never learned this before. I tried doing it for a long time but to no avail. Look at my hands... All these tiny holes were poked by the needle! I love you so much, and Ian is your son... Why would I ever lie to you? Sebastian, I had no choice..." She then showed the man her hands that were full of tiny holes as her eyes welled up with tears, arousing sympathy with her piteous look. Sasha started to feel uneasy, as if she had a premonition that something bad was going to happen. This woman was obviously good at playing mind games. She had probably come up with this backup plan earlier on and was prepared to use this tactic once her secret was exposed. To Sasha's despair, the usually shrewd man did not realize that Xandra was putting up a show. As he stared intently at Xandra's pair of hands, the burning rage in his eyes vanished almost immediately. "Why did you have to do this to yourself?" "Yes, you're right. I admit that I was asking for trouble, but I really felt like doing it. Ian is your son, so I'm trying my best to treat him like my flesh and blood too. Since Ms. Wand knows how to knit, can I learn from her? I promise that I'll put a lot of effort into this. When I know how to knit later on, I will knit for Ian every day. No matter what he likes, I can knit it for him." She was imitating how Sasha talked to Little Ian just now.

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"Impossible! I won't teach you! I can knit Little Ian's clothes myself. So why would I teach you?" Xandra's words agitated Sasha in an instant, and her mind was overpowered by the rising exasperation in her heart. Unable to hold herself back any longer, Sasha rejected impulsively, blurting out harsh words. Usually, she was not an impetuous person. Yet, she tended to lose control easily when it came to her children. Upon hearing her words, everyone's face turned grim, especially Sebastian whose face fell. "You're really rude. How could you outrightly reject Ms. Green when she is sincerely asking you to teach her knitting? Who're you to knit clothes for Ian? You sure are clueless about where you stand."

Berta broke the silence by criticizing Sasha disdainfully. Every single word from her was of great sarcasm like a sharp knife piercing into Sasha's heart. Still holding her son, Sasha

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clenched her fists at Berta's words. "Berta, how can you be so disrespectful to Ms. Wand when she is willing to knit for Ian out of sincerity? Who are you to criticize her? You're really acting out of line here." Unexpectedly, Xandra reprimanded the housemaid at once for being rude to Sasha. She was still kneeling on the floor, clinging onto Sebastian's legs, and there were tears on her pretty, flawless face. It seemed as though she was defending Sasha by speaking up for her. *Protective of me?* Sasha rolled her eyes and snickered. The woman's pretentious attitude really disgusted her. Yet, Sebastian was apparently touched by Xandra's words. When he saw how forgiving and magnanimous she was, the flames of rage in him were completely put out. "You don't have to degrade yourself by pleading with her. There're actually many other things that you can do for my son." In an instant, Xandra was on cloud nine. She raised her head and asked excitedly, "

Sebastian, are you serious? Does it mean... you're willing to forgive me? Sebastian, I-I'm so happy..." She burst into tears, but this time, they were genuine and not crocodile's tears; they were tears of joy for her victory against Sasha! Meanwhile, Sasha was trembling all over. Her heart was filled with a mixture of suffocating rage, despair, and indescribable sorrow. She had a hard time accepting the fact that the man was totally oblivious to that woman's cunningness. *Can't he tell that the b\*tch is just putting on a show? Perhaps he is deliberately turning a blind eye to everything. She's the woman he loves the most, so no matter what she's done, he will still choose to forgive her. When I was eight months pregnant years ago, he even had the audacity to abandon us just to be with the love of his life.* Sasha tightened her arms around her son's tiny body and shut her red-rimmed, teary eyes in weariness. "

Ms. Nancy?" Matteo could sense his mommy's grief, so he hugged her back to give her mental support. He finally understood what his mommy had been enduring all this while. *Poor Mommy! Daddy's really dense and doesn't deserve any sympathy. Mommy made the right decision by leaving him that time. Thank God I've stayed by her side all these years!* "Ms. Nancy, don't be sad." "Alright, I'm not sad anymore. Little Ian, don't worry. I will not let you get hurt no matter what. I will protect you by all means." Gazing lovingly at her son's face, Sasha quickly wiped her tears away and consoled him.

Matteo remained silent, yet Sebastian could sense that something was amiss. He glared at them with a cold glint in his eyes and asked, "Sasha Wand, what are you up to?" As though her heart had turned stone-cold, Sasha replied calmly, "Mr. Hayes, you really have no idea about what I'm going to do? Since you couldn't care less about Little Ian's safety, don't blame me for being ruthless. From now onward, my only aim is to snatch him away from you!" "What makes you think you're capable of doing that?" "Since I could even crawl out of my grave, nothing is impossible for me. Don't ever underestimate anyone's ability. You won't know what to expect when a seemingly vulnerable woman like me is infuriated. Sebastian Hayes, you'd better think twice before you leap." The last few words sent a chill down Sebastian's spine. As Sebastian gave Sasha a glance, his heart skipped a beat at the sight of her bloodshot eyes; there was murderous intent in them. *If she's given a knife now,*

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*she'll undoubtedly kill anyone standing in her way with it! She's gone bonkers!* Sebastian swallowed hard. "Are you out of your mind?" "You can say so. If I see any wounds on Little Ian's body again, don't blame me for teaching her a lesson!" After warning Sebastian, Sasha yanked Berta, who was standing beside her, and gave her a hard poke in the neck. Everything occurred within such a short span of time. Berta could only give a shriek of pain before her stiff body collapsed on the floor. Everyone in the dining room gaped in shock at what they saw.

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*What did she do? What just happened?* Astonished, everyone stood rooted to the spot. When they finally recollected themselves and glanced at Berta again, she had stopped twitching on the floor. They only realized what had happened when they saw a long needle glistening on her neck. *My goodness!* At that instant, everyone felt goosebumps all over their bodies. Meanwhile, blood drained from Xandra's face while her entire body was trembling in fear. "Sasha Wand, what have you done? Are you crazy? How dare you murder someone here! Have you gone mad?" Sebastian finally came to his senses. Staring at the housemaid who was lying motionless on the floor, he roared as rage surged within him.

*She's mad! She has gone mad! Is she even aware of what she is doing? This is a human being, not an animal! How could she kill someone so impulsively? Is she out of her mind? Since when did she become such a cold-blooded and brutal person?* Sebastian felt as if he was about to have a heart attack. Unperturbed, Sasha stared at him and said scornfully, "Why? Are you scared now? Remember this, Sebastian Hayes, don't ever try to cross my boundaries!" Like a phantom, she gritted out those words through clenched teeth before storming out of the villa. Everyone was rendered speechless. Xandra was still trembling with fear and could barely utter any words. It did not come to anyone's mind to stop her from stepping out of the enormous villa. Xandra only came to her senses when Sasha's figure almost disappeared from her sight. "Quick! Stop her! She's killed someone! How can we just let her leave like that! Go and get her at once!" Xandra shrieked hysterically. She finally tore off her facade, revealing her true self. Her eyes were loaded with abhorrence as if she intended to rip Sasha into pieces. But she was fated to be disappointed. The moment Sasha reached the main entrance of the villa, a miracle occurred. *Gulp!* Berta, who was still lying motionless on the floor a while ago, suddenly let out a deep breath. "Cough!

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Cough! Cough! Ms. Green, I finally... finally made it..." There was only dead silence in the dining room. Again, everyone was stupefied. At Sasha's rental apartment in Old Town. When the clock almost struck four in the afternoon, Ian received a call from Matteo. At that moment, he was watching anime with Vivian in the living room. He was not keen on anime, but his mommy had reminded him to look after his sister.

So he had no choice but to accompany her. When the phone rang, he answered at once. "Hello?" "Ian, is Mommy home?" Matteo asked Ian right after he answered the call. *Mommy?* Ian scanned his surroundings and frowned; the two of them were the only ones at home. "No, she's not home yet. Why? Isn't Mommy with you in the villa?" Matteo's face became grimmer. *It's been quite some time since she left Royal Court One and yet, she's still not home. I bet Mommy is hiding somewhere and crying right now.* When they were overseas, Sasha would never cry in front of her children in order not to let them worry about her. Whenever she was upset, she would go somewhere else till she felt better. Matteo could not wait to leave the villa at once to look for his mommy. "Ian, let's swap back." "Huh?" Ian was startled and asked curiously, "Swap back? Now? I thought you said tomorrow?" He was starting to like this place and yearned to spend more time together with his mommy. At the thought of the villa that was void of warmth, he did not feel like going back. His question triggered Matteo's frustration on the other end of the line. He yelled in anger, "No, I can't stay here any longer. What a terrible place! I can't stand it anymore!" "Why?" "You should ask your daddy! Ian, who's that woman named Xandra? Her acting skills are horrible, yet Daddy still chose to turn a blind eye to what she did. He even sided with her and reprimanded Mommy. What happened to Daddy? He doesn't know how to make judgments, does he?" Ian was at a loss for words. After a while, he replied coldly with a scowl on his face, "She's Daddy's girlfriend." "What did you say? Girlfriend?" Matteo's face fell. "So does that mean she might become your stepmother?"

Shaking his head, Ian said unhappily, "I've no idea. But I don't like her, and I don't want her to be my stepmother." He had clearly expressed his stance on this matter. Matteo's anger was slightly appeased upon hearing this. "Ian, I'm glad that we share the same sentiments. You know what? Initially, I intended to get Daddy and Mommy back together after discovering our identities. However, I was really infuriated by what I saw just now. I'm really disappointed with Daddy. I've never seen such a scum like him!" Matteo practically roared out his last sentence. He even used the word "scum" to describe his daddy! There was no doubt that he was traumatized by the incident in the afternoon.

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Ian fell silent. He was not unfamiliar with Xandra and had always known her to be a two-faced phony who would put up a show in his father's presence. But he didn't tell on her as he didn't want to stir up trouble. *As for Daddy, his temperament is the worst. The way he treated Mommy on that boat was just mean!* With that thought, Ian agreed that the two of them should swap back to their original identities. After hanging up the phone, Ian did as Matteo told him and tricked his sister into buying him some food downstairs. He then left the rental apartment and took a cab back to Frontier Bay.

After a few minutes, Ian successfully sneaked into his bedroom in Royal Court One without anyone noticing. This was the first time the twins met each other in person since their births. "Whoa! We really do look exactly like each other!" exclaimed Matteo as he finally saw his twin brother in the flesh for the first time. Ian was also amazed at their resemblance to each other. But before he could respond, his small body was already embraced tightly by his passionate twin brother. Ian was rendered speechless momentarily as there was an unfamiliar but warm sensation spreading from his little chest. "Alright,

I've got to go now. Mommy should be back soon," Matteo explained. He was worried that the longer he lingered, the more likely someone might walk in on them. Being the more emotional one, Ian replied with a discernible sadness in his voice, "But... will we meet again? And will Mommy come over again?" After learning what had happened today from Matteo, Ian was afraid that he would no longer be able to see his mother. Matteo patted his brother's shoulder while speaking in a comforting voice, "Don't you worry. Mommy loves you so much, so she'll certainly come back to visit you. But you have to remember. When she comes back here, you have to protect her from bad Daddy, okay?" Feeling reassured, Ian nodded and said, "Certainly!" On that note, the twins' brief encounter ended. As soon as Matteo left the room, Sebastian came up from downstairs.

He was still fuming over the fact that Ian threw a big tantrum at him after Sasha had left. For the first time in his life, his son told him that he hated him and never wanted to see him anymore. Since then, the little boy had locked himself inside his bedroom upstairs. As Sebastian stood outside his son's bedroom, he furrowed his brows and took a deep breath before knocking on the door. "Ian, it's Daddy. Can you open the door, please? There's something I want to talk to you about." Instead of opening the door for his father, Ian grabbed onto his pillow and sprinted toward his bed. He was still mad at Sebastian. *If what*

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*Matteo said was true, he has really gone overboard for bullying Mommy because of Xandra.* Ian buried his head into his pillow. "Ian?" "I'm sleeping!"

The cold and impatient voice from the five-year-old added fuel to the fire already burning in Sebastian, causing the corner of his eyes to twitch uncontrollably. *This little rascal! Since when did he dare to talk like this to his own father? This is ridiculous!* Sebastian had exhausted all his patience and decided to unlock his son's bedroom door with his own fingerprint. "Ian?" "Daddy, you just do whatever it is that pleases you with no regard for others, don't you? It's annoying!" Sebastian had never thought that his son would be capable of throwing such a strong insult at him. He was taken aback by the intensity of the hatred in Ian's voice and thus decided to try a softer approach. "I'm sorry. It's my fault for barging into your bedroom."

"I was just so worried about you. Ian, I really need to talk to you about Ms. Xandra." Ms. Xandra? Ian's face turned red. "What's more to say about her?" Sebastian suppressed his anger and continued to build his case, "I know, you think that I have acted too rashly toward you... that lady doctor today. I just want to remind you that she's a stranger, after all. But Ms. Xandra, on the other hand, is someone who will be living with us in the future. So, if I have to choose a side, it'll definitely be Ms. Xandra. Do you understand?" "Why is that?" "Because I love her, and she's going to be my life partner,"

Sebastian replied so flatly as though he was answering to any other business matter in the office. Ian finally fell silent. He was not Matteo who had spent all his life living with their mother, so he was not able to fully comprehend how hurtful Sebastian's words were to Sasha. Xandra, on the other hand, had been by his father's side throughout the past five years, so much so that Ian was already accustomed to her constant presence in his life. "If that's what you wish, Daddy."

"But just remember this, if you insist on marrying Ms. Xandra, the lady doctor will no longer belong to you, and she'll have no relations with you whatsoever," Ian finally uttered the words that were way too mature for a five-year-old. "What did you say?" Sebastian's eyes narrowed quizzically. He wondered if he might have misheard his words. *The lady doctor? Why did Ian mention that woman out of the blue? And what did he mean by she will no longer belong to me? That woman will belong to the Hayes family for all eternity as long as I say so!* Without

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realizing it himself, Sebastian was offended by the notion that Sasha would have no relations with him at all in the foreseeable future.

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Sasha came back to her rental apartment three hours later. She was at a law firm to inquire about custody issues regarding her eldest son. But the woman was devastated when the lawyer told her flat out that the chances of her getting custody of Ian were zero. Her dead identity in government archives being the first obstacle. Secondly, the party that she was up against was just too powerful for her to gain any foothold before a judge. *I could deal with the first problem by restoring my identity and then divorcing that scum. Since our hatred for each other is mutual, that shouldn't be difficult to achieve. But the second problem is just driving me mad! With Hayes Corporation now ranking among the top ten companies in the world, I'll never have the same backing as he does to win this case.* Sasha dragged her tiresome body into her rental apartment.

"Mommy, you're finally home! Uncle Solomon is here, and he's bought us lots of stuff!" The delighted voice came from Vivian, who ran toward her mother with a lollipop in her hand. Matteo, on the other hand, seemed to be having a great time talking to Solomon. Solomon was Sasha's good friend. They had known each other when they were abroad a long time ago. Sasha gathered herself and walked over to greet Solomon, "Hello there. Did the kids call you up again? You shouldn't have given in to them. You live so far away!" "That's alright. I actually came here on my own accord to visit the kids. It had been a while since I last saw them. Even less so after you came back," Solomon replied. Solomon was a lawyer. Bespectacled, he exuded a pleasant and polite bearing that always managed to make people around him feel at ease. Sasha stole a glance at the clutters around the house and instantly felt embarrassed. "I'm sorry about the messiness, Solomon. You see, I didn't expect a guest..." Sasha said apologetically. "Don't be ridiculous. I'm not a stranger." Solomon gave a faint smile and said, "By the way, Matt was telling me that you were out to see a patient. Is the patient feeling better now?" "Er..." Solomon's unexpected question took Sasha by surprise as she fumbled for the right words. *I have just managed to turn off that bloody switch!* "His condition was beyond medical help. Forget about him!" the woman grunted. In the next moment, something seemed to have struck Sasha as she spoke, "That's right! I almost forget that you're a lawyer too.

Mind if I pick your brain for a minute? If a couple is getting divorced, does the party with extreme wealth always get custody of their kids?" "Hmm, custody?" Solomon sat back down elegantly on the small couch. His gaze stopped momentarily on Sasha before he calmly replied, "Yes, almost always." Instantly, Sasha's hopes were shattered. Solomon was amused by the deflated look on Sasha's face as he continued to explain, "Having said that, there are exceptions to it. Although having enough money is important, the law dictates that

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under certain circumstances, the less wealthy party can overtake custody of their children.” “Is this true?” Sasha’s face instantly lit up as if seeing hope for the first time. “ That’s right. For example, if the guardian has caused physical harm to the kid or engaged in criminal activities. These are just some of the examples. Do you know someone who’s in such circumstances?” Solomon asked out of curiosity after explaining in detail to Sasha. He was not one to pry, but this was the first time Sasha had sought legal opinion on that kind of matter from him. Hence, Solomon thought that was a little odd. However, Sasha was not ready to confide in him. So she simply replied, “Oh, it’s just a friend of mine. She’s getting a divorce, but her husband is withholding their kid. So, I just thought I might be able to help her out by seeking some legal opinions on her behalf.” Solomon smiled in acknowledgment. Meanwhile, Matteo, who had been eavesdropping on the adults’ conversation, was in complete shock. His jaw dropped when he heard the word “custody.” *Custody! I wonder what’s on Mommy’s mind. Is she thinking about taking over Ian’s custody? If that’s the case, it’d be awesome to have Ian coming to live with us. Mommy and the three of us will then form a complete family of four! As for bad Daddy...* There were twinkles in Matteo’s eyes as an idea took form in his cunning little mind. He then looked across the living room at Solomon, who had been stealing glances at his mother, and said, “Uncle Solomon, since Mommy doesn’t know anything about this custody issue, why don’t you take her out and teach her what to do?” “Teach her?” Solomon was puzzled. “Yes, Uncle Solomon. I think you should take her over to your place and tell her what to do in detail. I’ll look after Vivi at home, so don’t you worry about us,” Matteo eagerly suggested. *Since Daddy is in love with the mean woman, I should find Mommy a boyfriend too. She is such a nice person, so there’s no way men will reject her.*

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