

The More the Merrier Chapter 496

Chapter 496 Father And Son At The Hospital

“Don’t worry about that. Have you reached the hotel?”

Benjamin’s deep voice rang out from the other end of the phone.

Arissa glanced out the car window, only to see that they were still on the way.

“Nope.”

“All right, then. I’ll be hanging up if there’s nothing else.”

Pausing for a second, Benjamin then added, “I’ve got a conference call.”

“Ah, I see!” With that, Arissa had no choice but to hang up.

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It was only about ten minutes later that they arrived at the hotel.

A room was already reserved for them, and Ethen led them up to the suite.

“Rest earlier, Ms. York.”

Arissa nodded. “You’ve also worked very hard, so rest earlier.”

Ethen flashed her a smile. “Sure!”

He still had to return to the hospital, but he only left after bidding the five children farewell.

“Bradley, you’ve also worked hard, so go and rest!” Arissa said to Bradley as well.

“Okay!” Bradley nodded in agreement.

“Oh yes, Bradley, since we’ve found Tim, tell the rest that they can stop searching,” Arissa prompted.

Hearing that, Bradley chuckled. “I already did that.”

Arissa nodded in approval and urged, “Go and rest, quick! If there’s anything else, we’ll talk about it tomorrow.”

“Good night!” Bradley said to them all.

“Good night, Mr. Hinton!” the five children replied.

“Hurry up and go take a shower!” Arissa ordered the children after closing the door.

The five children glanced at her and suggested, “Mommy, you go first. We’ll shower after you’re done.”

Chortling, Arissa remarked, “There are two bathrooms, so let’s shower at the same time!”

The five children studied their surroundings, only to discover that there was also a bathroom outside.

“In that case, we’ll use the bathroom outside while you shower in the en suite bathroom, Mommy.”

“Okay!”

Arissa followed the children to the bathroom and helped them to adjust the water temperature before she headed to the bathroom in the master bedroom for a shower.

Meanwhile, Benjamin waited until Mary was asleep before he asked Tim to step out with him.

Tim tucked the covers around Mary before he whirled around and exited the room.

“You asked for me, Mr. Graham?”

Tim stared at Benjamin, neither happy nor angry, his voice placid.

Benjamin swept his gaze over him and patted him on the head. Then, he led him to the adjacent room by the shoulders.

“Let’s talk in the adjacent room.”

Eyeing the man, Tim followed him to the adjacent room with apprehension building within him.

I wonder what he wants to say to me.

Benjamin went to the couch and sat down. Seeing that Tim was a touch nervous, he scooped the latter up to sit next to him.

“Have some food!”

Ethen brought supper when he returned a while ago.

Benjamin took a piece of chicken wing for Tim.

Swallowing, Tim shook his head. "I'm not hungry."

Benjamin stared at him for a long while before asking, "Do you want me to feed you?"

While saying that, he brought it right to Tim's mouth.

Stunned, Tim could only take it from the man. He lowered his head and munched on the chicken wing.

It was exceedingly fragrant and delicious.

As he recalled Mary in the adjacent room, his appetite faded, for he felt guilty as though he was eating behind her back.

Benjamin stroked his head and inquired, "Is it good?"

Tim pursed his lips. After a while, he nodded honestly. "Yeah."

"Then, why aren't you eating anymore?" Benjamin quirked an eyebrow.

Stealing a glance at the man, Tim dipped his head. "Can I keep some for Grandma?"

Benjamin's heart jolted, and a myriad of feelings brewed within him.

"It won't taste nice when it's cool, so you eat it. When your grandma wakes up tomorrow, I'll have someone buy it for her."

Tim bit his lip before glancing at the chicken wing in his hand. At the end of the day, he was still a child, so he was no match for the temptation of food.

"Thank you, Mr. Graham!"

At his address, Benjamin's gaze flickered imperceptibly. Well, I'm afraid that he won't change his address of me so easily.

The look in his eyes was tender as he watched the little boy munch on the chicken wing.

After taking a few bites, Tim turned and looked at the man. "There is another one, Mr. Graham!"

Benjamin reclined and leaned back against the couch. "I don't like it. You can finish everything! Later, I've got something to tell you."

Upon hearing that, Tim frowned. "What do you want to say to me, Mr. Graham?"

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Chapter 497 Quick To Answer The Call

Benjamin swept his gaze over Tim. "We'll talk when you're done eating."

Tim hesitated for a moment before he continued eating.

As Benjamin crossed his legs, he pinned his gaze on the little boy and scrutinized him.

Sensing the man's gaze, Tim turned and looked over. The instant he met the man's eyes, he lowered his head once more.

Benjamin then averted his gaze and toyed with his phone, wondering whether Arissa was asleep.

At the hotel, Arissa had just finished showering and was planning to tuck the children into bed when she heard Jesse's stomach growling.

"Are you hungry?"

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She pinched the little girl's cheeks indulgently.

In response, Jesse nodded.

"Yup! I'm hungry, Mommy!"

"Wait for a while. I'll order some food up!"

Arissa then phoned the suite's housekeeper and ordered some food to be delivered to the room.

The five children were ecstatic, cheering, "Yay! We're having supper!"

Initially, they were quite happy. Then, they remembered Tim at the hospital and felt a touch guilty.

"Tim doesn't get to eat at the hospital," Jasper lamented with a sigh.

"We can ask the bodyguards to send some food over!" Gavin suggested.

At the sight of the children's concern for Tim, Arissa was very much gratified.

“Phone your daddy and have him buy some food nearby. That’ll be quicker. By the time the bodyguards arrive with food, Tim might have gone to bed.”

Hearing that, the five children exchanged glances. Zachary and the others didn’t want to make the call, so they all swung their gazes at Gavin.

Gavin eyed them before glancing at Arissa. “Why don’t you do it, Mommy?”

When we parted ways at the hospital, Daddy and Mommy kissed. Thus, if Mommy were to call Daddy now, not only would it improve their relationship, but Daddy would also agree undoubtedly.

He knew that Benjamin wasn’t in the habit of having supper, so the man might not necessarily buy supper for Tim if he were to make the call as he felt that it wasn’t healthy to eat before going to bed at night.

Arissa looked at the children and shook her head with a smile. “Okay, I’ll make the call, then!”

While saying that, she phoned Benjamin. The ringing tone didn’t even ring before the man’s voice drifted into her ears.

“Yes?”

The baritone voice that traveled through the phone strummed her eardrums, startling her.

Thinking that she might have been hearing things, she took the phone away from her ear. Only when she saw that the call was connected did she place it back against her ear.

“Say something, Arissa.”

Puzzlement inundated Arissa. “Why were you so quick to answer the call?”

Benjamin was silent for a minute before admitting, “The phone was in my hand when I saw an incoming call from you.”

At that turn of events, amusement flooded Arissa. “Tim might be hungry at this time, so buy him some food near the hospital before he goes to bed.”

When she was in the hospital earlier, she forgot all about that. Children had better digestion, so they got hungry easily.

“Also, buy him some milk.”

As Benjamin listened to her orders, his gaze alighted on Tim, who was eating quietly. "He's about to be full."

Arissa was stunned for a while before understanding dawned upon her. "You bought him food?"

"Ethen brought it when he came over just now," Benjamin explained.

Surprise swamped Arissa that Ethen still went to the hospital despite the late hour.

"All right, then. Rest earlier when you both finish eating. Don't sleep too late."

"If you and the children are hungry, order some food," Benjamin uttered in concern.

"I've done so, and we're now waiting for the food."

"Okay," Benjamin murmured.

After a moment's hesitation, Arissa requested, "Snap a photo of Tim eating and send it to me."

Following that, Benjamin's chuckle drifted into her ear. "Do you not believe me?"

Giving a cough, Arissa clarified, "I only want to have a look at him. It has nothing to do with believing you."

"Wait a moment."

Benjamin then hung up the phone. Shortly after, Arissa received a picture of Tim's profile as he ate.

With affection clear on her face, she caressed his image on the picture.

The five children leaned over as well. "It looks delicious!"

"Tim is having chicken wings!" Jesse exclaimed.

She then swallowed.

Seeing that, Arissa chuckled. "Do you want to have chicken wings?"

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Chapter 498 He Likes To Eat Meat

Jesse nodded, indicating that she indeed wanted to have chicken wings.

Arissa caressed her head. "We'll see whether there are any later. If there aren't any, we'll order again!"

"Yay!" Jesse was over the moon.

In no time, the doorbell rang.

Zachary sprinted over to open the door. He peeked through the peephole and only opened the door when he ascertained that it was a server from the hotel.

Clocking his wariness, Gavin reminded, "There are bodyguards outside."

"Hehe, I'm used to it!"

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Zachary threw him a look before opening the door and allowing the server to enter.

"Hello, miss. Are there chicken wings?"

"Yes!"

The suite's housekeeper recited the menu to them while carrying the food to the dining table.

"Mommy, there are chicken wings! Quick, come and eat!"

The five children were all in seventh heaven at the sight of the food. They all called Arissa over.

Hence, Arissa walked over. When she saw the tableful of food for supper, she thanked the housekeeper.

Only when the housekeeper had left did she start feasting with the children.

"This is for you, Gavin!" Zachary offered.

"Don't take mine, Oliver!" Jasper chided.

"I didn't take yours. Isn't yours right there on your plate?" Oliver countered.

"Hehe, I took it!" Jesse interjected.

“Everyone, stop taking all the food! Mommy hasn’t eaten yet. We’ll order more if there isn’t enough!” Gavin asserted.

As Arissa watched her children playing around, joy overfilled her, and she wore an expression of indulgence on her face.

“Just eat everything if you all like it. I will just eat a bit.”

If only Tim is here with us! I wonder what he likes to eat.

At that thought, Arissa queried, “Sweethearts, did you all have dinner with Tim?”

“Yup! We ate with him at the hospital. Mr. Frank, Mr. Hinton, and Uncle Shaun brought food back for us after they ate outside,” Gavin answered.

Arissa nodded in acknowledgment, her gaze fixated on the five children.

“Then, did you all notice what he likes to eat?”

At once, anguish showed on the faces of all five children.

“He likes to eat meat,” Zachary replied in a whisper.

As soon as Arissa glimpsed their distressed expressions, she promptly guessed the reason.

Tim seldom got to eat meat, so he naturally loved it.

“Is there anything else?”

“Mommy, he also likes to eat prawns! He even ate the shells!”

Jesse spoke while she ate, causing food to spew out of her mouth.

Jasper hurriedly dodged in disgust. “Don’t talk while you’re eating, Jesse! Look, you’re spewing food everywhere!”

Immediately, Jesse flashed him an apologetic smile. “I’m sorry! It wasn’t deliberate!”

The instant she put on her coquettish act, Jasper crumbled.

“Oh well, I forgive you. Here, this is for you!”

Jasper placed the entire plate of skewers contaminated by her saliva before her.

Jesse happily stuck her tongue out.

Meanwhile, Arissa smiled at their antics.

“When did you all eat? Did you all not have your fill during dinner, or did you all eat too early that you’re so hungry now?”

“We had dinner around six or seven o’clock.” Zachary glanced at his mother.

Chuckling, Arissa replied, “I also ate around that hour. Hurry up and eat! When you’re done, go and brush your teeth before going to bed. It’s almost midnight now!”

That was the latest the children ever went to bed, so she rushed them.

“Got it, Mommy!”

All five children didn’t tarry either as they continued eating at lightning speed. Then, they all dashed to the bathroom to brush their teeth before lying in bed.

“Good night, Mommy!” Gavin greeted.

“Good night, Mommy!” Zachary seconded.

“Good night, Mommy!” Oliver went next.

“Good night, Mommy!” Jasper followed.

“Good night, Mommy!” Jesse went last.

“Good night, Sweethearts!” Arissa replied gently, leaning down and kissing them on the forehead.

The children could no longer battle their drowsiness at that hour and promptly fell asleep after closing their eyes.

Arissa pulled the covers over them and caressed their faces while sitting on the edge of the bed.

Truly, she was glad that they were all very sensible and didn’t blame her for neglecting them that day.

She only returned to the master bedroom to rest when they were deep in slumber.

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Chapter 499 Why Tim Was Abandoned

In the hospital, Tim wiped his mouth after finishing his supper.

Turning to face Benjamin, he gathered the courage to ask, "Mr. Graham, what do you want to tell me?"

Glancing at him, Benjamin handed him the milk made from the milk powder Ethen had just bought.

"Drink this!"

Upon receiving it, Tim felt the milk tasted strange after the first mouthful.

When he saw how Tim grimaced at the drink, Benjamin cracked a slight smile.

"I don't like it either. Nevertheless, it's good for you. So, drink up!"

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After giving Benjamin a look, Tim returned his gaze to the glass of milk. It would be a waste if I don't finish it.

In the end, he pinched his nose and gulped down the milk as if he was drinking medicine.

With a gentle gaze, Benjamin used a paper towel to wipe his son's mouth.

After that, he began to explain what happened.

"Have you been wondering why Gavin is staying with us, while you're out there all alone?"

Lowering his gaze, Tim clenched his pants as he felt a squeeze in his heart.

When he saw the look on Tim's face, Benjamin tousled the latter's hair sympathetically.

"I'm your daddy, while Arissa is your mommy!" Benjamin repeated their identities to Tim.

"Furthermore, your mommy loves you a lot!"

Tim bit his lip in response. Even though he didn't say a word, Benjamin could sense the sorrow welling up inside him.

"Tim, actually, we only found out about your existence a few days ago. In other words, we have no idea you existed before that!"

Feeling doubtful, Tim looked at Benjamin in disbelief, "How is that possible?"

I'm sure you must have abandoned me because you didn't like me.

As Benjamin detected the disheartened look in Tim's eyes, he felt his heart tighten.

No wonder Arissa broke down in front of him. Even I can feel my nose burn.

Suppressing the lump in his throat, Benjamin continued to explain, "We like you a lot, and no one wants to abandon you. The one who dumped you wasn't Mommy, so don't blame or resent her for it. If anything, you should blame me. If it wasn't for me, you wouldn't be suffering out there for so many years. I am the one who has failed you!"

Tim blinked his eyes. It wasn't because they didn't want me or Mommy abandoned me?

Benjamin sighed.

"Your mommy was the one who had it the worst. Back when she was pregnant, someone sabotaged her by locking her up in a secluded place, causing her to suffer alone with no hope of rescue."

Thinking back to how Arissa was imprisoned in darkness, Benjamin couldn't help but feel outraged and heartache at the same time.

"The perpetrator captured mommy because she wanted to marry me by using you. After Mommy gave birth to you, she took you and Gavin away. During that time, she was barely conscious. Moreover, she was subsequently dealt more harm and thrown into an area where wild beasts roamed.

"She, along with Zachary, Oliver, Jasper, and Jesse almost lost their lives. The injury in her head also resulted in memory loss. Hence, she couldn't remember that she had given birth to six babies. After Gavin and you were taken away, only Gavin was returned, as that woman hid your existence from us. It wasn't until your mommy returned to search for Gavin that the past was exposed. When that woman tried to harm them again, she was arrested by the police.

"Subsequently, she used you to threaten Mommy by telling her that you were still in her hands. Once your mommy knew about it, she was devastated and fainted from the shock. In order to find you, she wandered the streets aimlessly, thinking that every homeless child could be you. If you turned out to be among them, she would blame herself for life. All this while, she lived in constant fear of you being sold off or losing your life.

"Yesterday, she was just feeling better but stayed up the entire night looking for you. However, she fainted again this morning after learning that you had been abandoned and might never be found."

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Chapter 500 Crying His Lungs Out

After giving Tim a look, Benjamin's tone was both grim and filled with pain.

"When I called her to tell her that you were alive, she didn't believe it. Instead, she headed to see the lawyer, hoping to bring forward the court's verdict over the perpetrator. Unfortunately, she fainted the moment she arrived at the lawyer's office.

"That aside, Gavin grew up with me, while Zachary, Oliver, Jasper, and Jesse were raised by your mommy overseas and only came back recently. Prior to that, we didn't know each other at all. Tim, the reason I'm telling you all this is so that you won't have any misconceptions about your mommy. Not only did she not forget you but she was also extremely distraught when she couldn't find you. In fact, she was filled with self-blame, pain, and remorse all this while. It wasn't a case of her not wanting you at all. You have to know that she loves all of you very much."

When Tim kept his head lowered, Benjamin was filled with pity for him.

"Tim, Mommy's sickness isn't entirely because of you. It was because she didn't manage to recover properly after giving birth to the six of you. Moreover, she had suffered injuries that weakened her body further. Thus, you shouldn't blame yourself, for it will just make your mommy feel bad," Benjamin reassured him while tousling his hair.

With a twitch of his eyelashes, Tim's eyes began to grow misty.

It turns out that Mommy didn't abandon me. It was a villain who forcefully took me away instead.

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Letting out a snuffle, Tim clenched his trousers with his fists.

Subsequently, Benjamin gave him a hug and patted him on his back.

"I'm the one who failed all of you. If I had investigated the matter thoroughly back then, all of you wouldn't have to suffer."

Sprawled in Benjamin's arms, Tim was trying to hold back his tears. However, Benjamin's apology tipped him over his threshold.

"Going forward, Mommy and I will definitely protect you. We will not let history repeat itself."

"Boo hoo..." Tim bawled uncontrollably.

Benjamin gave Tim the space to vent his frustrations as he patted the latter sympathetically on the back.

Listening to Tim's long-repressed sobs, Benjamin could feel his heart sink.

Fortunately, I'm the one that's explaining it to him. Or else, Arissa would be just as devastated as he is.

Finally, Tim cried himself to sleep in Benjamin's arms.

When he noticed that Tim had stopped moving, Benjamin thought the latter had fainted from crying and quickly called for Shaun to come in.

Upon hearing Benjamin's frantic shout, Shaun burst in at once. "What is it?"

"Quick, check if he has fainted!"

Carrying Tim carefully in his arms, Benjamin furrowed his brows in concern.

After laying Tim down on the bed to examine him, Shaun quipped with a smile, "He's just sleeping!"

"Sleeping?"

Benjamin frowned as he gave Shaun a doubtful look.

Shaun was immediately annoyed. "He really is sleeping. If you don't believe me, you can get another doctor to confirm!"

Pursing his lips, he watched Tim earnestly. He's asleep?

"Ethen!"

"Mr. Graham?"

Ethen looked at Benjamin as he awaited further instructions.

"Call for the doctor."

The moment the words left Benjamin's mouth, Shaun was outraged.

Amused by what happened, Ethen went off to get a doctor just to put Benjamin's mind at ease.

Meanwhile, Shaun continued to breathe heavily by the side.

Calm down, calm down. This guy only remembers that I'm an amazing doctor when he needs me. But since he's just overly concerned for his children, I won't hold it against him.

It wasn't until the doctor arrived and confirmed that Tim was asleep that Benjamin's mind was put at ease.

If he has fallen sick, Arissa would definitely blame me for it.

"Mr. Graham, he's just exhausted. All he needs is enough sleep to rejuvenate himself."

Sitting by the bed, Benjamin tucked Tim in and wiped the tears off his eyelashes.

Given how feeble he was, Tim looked as if he was about to be swallowed by the bed.

It was a sight that jolted Benjamin. We really need to take good care of him.

As Shaun instructed the doctor to leave the room, he, too, followed suit to mollify his own bruised ego.