

A Spoonful of Sugar: Don't Beg for Love By Oopsie Daisy

Chapter 171

“Forget it, I’m not comfortable with letting Ren stay with the Duvals.” She couldn’t help but feel worried when she thought about Julie and Sophia. “I should let Ren stay at my place. At least he wouldn’t get bullied.”

“No.” Rickard immediately rejected the idea and looked at Hesper curiously. He hadn’t thought of what to say, so he just tilted his head.

“But... mom, I’d be bored at home alone. Just let me come here. I’ll be fine!” Ren tugged at Hesper’s wrist

as he hinted at Rickard.

That was when Rickard noticed that Renfrew had the ability to change the tides.

Hesper only cared about Renfrew’s safety, but it was logical. Renfrew could think for himself, so it would be boring for him to be alone.

She was just a vague concept to Renfrew in the past, a mother who didn’t take care of her own child. How could she blame Renfrew for missing her?

Hesper started feeling guilty when she thought of that

“Alright then, but you need to be vigilant and remember to disinfect when you get home, alright?”

“Okay!”

Watching Renfrew and Hesper get so close gave Rickard emotions he never felt. Renfrew was the heir of the Duval Group. Even though Rickard loved him, he wouldn’t let him act like a child.

Renfrew was a child... Was he too harsh on him in the past?

“What’s on your mind?” Hesper’s voice brought him back to reality, and he saw her staring at him suspiciously.

Rickard never zoned out before this because he was always focused, but in the past few days, Hesper noticed that he kept doing that and was curious about what was on his mind.

From the moment she opened her eyes, she noticed that Rickard changed.

She used to love him and hate him so deeply, but now everything seemed to have passed. She didn't hate him as much anymore, but she no longer had feelings either.

Rickard saved her but almost turned into an accomplice to the person who almost killed her.

A life for a life, but feelings can't be traded like that. Hesper didn't have the time and energy for a relationship, especially not with a man who hurt her so badly in the past.

"I'll work in your room from tomorrow and take care of Ren."

"...Alright." Hesper didn't hear any signs of a quid pro quo there, but since Rickard offered, she wasn't going to reject him. Renfrew needed to grow up in a normal environment. She was his mother and Rickard was his father. They should all be together.

After Rickard went home, he told Zikmund about Hesper's reaction. Zikmund felt that something was off, but still, Hesper had agreed to his suggestion.

"What's next?"

Zikmund was a little annoyed. "You're such a manly man. How do you flirt? You turn into a kitten, a tiger, or a wet puppy?"

"?" Rickard was silent for a moment.

"You've watched too much Animal World." Zikmund thought that he was beyond saving.

Chapter 172

Hesper was recovering and could now get off the bed and walk around. The doctors said that she had a strong body but didn't know that Hesper was just used to getting treatment because her body had gone through a lot.

When she left the Duval Family, she was hurt from head to toe and there were multiple sequelae.

Women's bodies were at their weakest after giving birth, but Hesper was tortured continuously, and there were the side effects of jumping off a building. Even when Matthew asked famous doctors from all over the world for help, her body was never fully healed.

"I've given you a full body checkup and realized that there's a metal plate on your knee. Even though you've recovered quite well, it must hurt when it rains or when it's cold."

The doctor looked at the report and didn't expect her to have so many injuries at her age.

“What is more deadly is that this isn’t a long-term solution. When your knee cap gives way to the friction, you might not be able to stand anymore.”

Hesper heard that multiple times and no longer had hope.

“That’s sequelae from an accident. Thank you, but I understand,” Hesper said politely. “How long until I can be discharged?”

Rickard stood outside the room as Renfrew held his hand, not understanding why his father wouldn’t go in. “Why? Is Mommy busy?”

“...Yes.” Rickard lowered his eyes.

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No one knew better than he did about how Hesper was injured.

Once the discussion in the room ended, the doctor got up. “If you keep recovering at the current rate, you’ll be out in no time. I’ll be excusing myself, Ms. Lane.”

Rickard took a few steps back as the doctor opened the door. The doctor wanted to say something, but Rickard gestured for him to stay quiet.

“Is there anything else, doctor?”

Hesper got up and walked over to the door but heard the door closing.

The doctor looked at this man standing in front of him and didn’t really understand what was happening. When Mrs. Duval gave birth, the news about Mr. Duval wanting to ‘save the child’ instead of the mother spread.

It was strictly forbidden for the doctors to ask if they should save the mother or the child, but it was the Duvals, so the doctor had to follow his orders and focus on saving the baby even if it meant sacrificing

the mother.

Ms. Lane’s survival impressed a lot of people, but the people who knew what happened knew that it wasn’t easy for Hesper to get so far.

“Is there no way... to save her leg?”

The doctor was honest. “The local doctors wouldn’t be able to, but the top surgeons might be able to help.”

Rickard nodded, then let the doctor be on his way.

“Does mommy’s leg hurt?”

Renfrew looked up at his father's stoic expression. To him, death and sickness was a foreign concept, so

he didn't understand what the doctor said.

Rickard rubbed his head but didn't speak.

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When the doctor told him that Hesper's leg wouldn't fully recover, he didn't feel anything except a little guilt. He never sought help from the best doctor for her.

"I'll find a way to help her."

Life at the hospital was just sleeping, working, and watching something to pass the time.

Ever since Hesper became part of the Lane family, she didn't have much leisure time, so she was getting bored of this. Rickard took half of her room, which made the already small room more claustrophobic.

She turned and saw Renfrew playing with his phone, so she turned around and unlocked her phone.

Hesper took a design course in college and it was the major she chose because she was interested in it. However, because she was pregnant with Renfrew and subsequently married Rickard, she didn't manage to graduate and had to drop out.

Later when Matthew arranged for her to go study abroad at an Ivy League College, she mentioned her previous education. She did quite well in school.

Firstly because she had a tough life and had to learn more with the resources that she had after facing the kindness shown by Ernest.

Secondly... Rickard was always the top student, and to follow in his footsteps and be in the same class with him, she forced herself to attend school, even though sometimes all she wanted to do was cry under her blanket.

She thought for a while and sent a message to Matthew.

Hesper: Matt, do I have a spot at Genecity University?

Matthew: Yes, why?

Hesper sat up and typed quickly.

Hesper: What do you think if I went back to school? I'll finish the work and won't let school get in the way.

of it.

Matthew stared at the message that Hesper sent over and sat there in silence.

Hesper never asked for anything from him and had always been responsible. She probably thought of him as her brother because of the help he gave her, but he always felt that he still wasn't doing enough.

Matthew: I'll support you if that's what you want. I've given a copy of your documents to Renee, so you can ask her to settle everything.

Hesper: Thanks, Matt!

Hesper didn't hesitate and immediately asked Renee to start with the process. Renee didn't expect her to want to go back to school, so she hadn't looked into the process yet and had to ask Hesper to wait for two days before she could restore her status as a student.

It wasn't urgent because Hesper wasn't able to attend classes just yet. However, just thinking about it excited Hesper.

Rickard noticed that her emotions were different when he was working. She looked... happy?

He then looked aside and saw Renfrew using his phone while looking very serious, as though he was trying to figure out a difficult question.

Rickard was confused. Why did he have a feeling that something was off?

Chapter 174

Renfrew was trying to finish the homework that Ms. Myrlade left for him. She gave him a lot this time and it was a lot harder than the ones before. He was able to finish the previous ones easily, but this time, he

was stuck.

Ms. Myriade: The footage that I hacked previously was recovered. If someone remembers this, they'll investigate it.

Ms. Myriade: My identity can't be exposed, but your parents aren't people that you can just lie to. I'll have to let you learn some simple functions so you can hack into surveillance.

Someone found out what they did?

Renfrew's chubby face looked so serious. Ms. Myriad helped him a lot, so he can't let her identity be exposed, or he might not be able to meet her in the future!

Ren: I'll do my best!

The three spend the time in silence together. Renee took Renfrew home at night but didn't look at Rickard in a friendly way.

"Safe journey," Hesper said as she tidied up Renfrew's collar. "Listen to Aunt Renee and no ice cream tonight."

"Alright." Renfrew nodded and held Renee's hand and waved goodbye. "Bye Mommy, bye Daddy."

After they left, Rickard had no reason to stay, so he grabbed his laptop and documents and was ready to leave when Hesper suddenly called out to him.

"Rickard."

Rickard froze and turned around unnaturally. "Yes?"

Hesper looked at him calmly, then said, "I want to speak to you about Ren."

The soft lighting of the room made Hesper's face look even softer. The last time she looked at him like that seemed to be a lifetime away. Rickard nodded his head without saying a word.

"I think your parenting method is problematic. Renfrew is three and almost four. Other kids would be enrolled in nursery school by now, but Renfrew rarely spends time with outsiders." Hesper was worried. "He wouldn't feel lonely if it wasn't because of this. I was missing from his life, and he didn't have friends either, only seeing Sophia and Julie all the time. What could he learn from that?"

Hesper didn't hide her feelings toward Julie and Sophia

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She would never believe that the pair would sincerely take care of Renfrew, even if he was the only descendant of the family.

Just as they said, Rickard was still young, so even if there wasn't Renfrew, he would have other options.

They looked down on her and wouldn't treat him nicely either.

Rickard had never attended nursery school because he followed his father to work since he was a child. All the education he had after that was business oriented. Renfrew was his only child, so he was very strict with him. If he wasn't able to blend into society, he would be ostracized.

That was how cruel the world was.

“I don’t care what you think, but I want my child to grow up in a normal environment and not just an unhappy robot after he grows up.”

Hesper was frowning. Rickard looked at him, but didn’t say if he agreed or not. After a long pause, he finally said, “Don’t frown.”

Hesper’s eyes were filled with surprise when he said that. Rickard didn’t realize that he had said that, but now that it was out, he held out his hand and tried to rub her brows apart, but Hesper avoided it.

“Stop that...”

Even though they weren’t unhappy together recently, Hesper had no intention of getting back with him.

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He had crossed the line.

Rickard’s hand froze in mid-air, then he took it back.

“I’m sorry.”

Hesper didn’t speak, so Rickard continued. “I’m fine with sending him to school, but we need to ask Ren if he’s fine with it.”

It was fine to ask Ren’s opinion because Hesper respected his opinion. Whether he went or not would be up to him. She wouldn’t make the decision for him even though she was his mother.

“Alright, we’ll speak to him tomorrow.”

Hesper looked tired, so Rickard didn’t say more. “I’m leaving now, rest well.”

The next day when Renfrew got there, Hesper and Rickard brought up the topic.

“Do you not want me around anymore?” Renfrew thought that Hesper wanted to send him to boarding school, so he gave her puppy eyes. “I’ll be good. I ate half a scoop of ice cream last night but I won’t do it again. Please don’t send me away!”

Hesper was surprised at the confession. She told him to not have more ice cream because the season was changing and he might just catch a cold, or something worse.

The child nodded with teary eyes. “Please don’t send me away!”

Hesper didn’t know whether to laugh or cry as she explained what a nursery was. They weren’t sending him away. They would send him over tomorrow morning and bring him back in the evening.

“The teachers will teach you something and you get to play with other children.”

Hesper patiently hugged Renfrew. “Even though it’s not mandatory, children should still have friends of their age. Don’t you want friends?”

Friends like Ms. Myriade?

Renfrew’s eyes shone. Before he met Ms. Myriade, he didn’t know what friends were, but he was always happy when he spent time with her.

It was different from when he spent time with Daddy and Mommy!

“I want to go.”

Hesper looked at his shiny eyes and couldn’t help but pinch his soft cheeks. “You’re such a good boy.”

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Rickard watched the mother and son’s loving interaction. Even though Renfrew grew up by his side, they

were never so close.

Mothers could never be replaced.

“Can you go to the nursery with me?” Renfrew looked from one parent to the other. “Would the other kids. go with their parents too?”

Hesper didn’t know the answer to that. It was true, but her relationship with Rickard... Sitting together with Rickard talking so calmly was her limit.

However, when she saw the anticipation in his eyes, Hesper couldn’t reject him, so she looked over to Reickard and hoped that he could come up with something.

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Rickard thought she was asking if it was alright.

“Alright, we’ll go together then.”

Hesper was silent, but seeing how happy Renfrew was and how Rickard already agreed, Renfrew would be devastated if she rejected, so she agreed too.

“Alright, but if Mommy or... or Daddy is busy, then we wouldn’t be able to go together.”

Renfrew nodded. “Alright, you’re the best! Daddy too, but you’re a little behind.”

Hesper laughed and her thin shoulder blades trembled like a butterfly that was ready to take flight.

Hesper and Rickard were almost fully recovered. Hesper was very wary of her health, so she would only go home once the doctor said it was fine for her to, but Rickard stayed because he wanted to spend time

with her.

Benji would tease him every time he sent documents over because when he was more badly injured than this, he didn't take as much time off.

Even when Juniper was with Rickard, his judgment would never be swayed because of relationships, especially when it came to working.

Hesper was fully recovered and there wasn't even a scar on her back. She was very happy about that because she needed to be in evening dresses, so her choices would be limited if there was a scar.

It was thanks to the medication that Julian sent to her. Even the doctor said that it would be impossible to recover so well if it wasn't because of it.

Ever since Julian started learning from his professor, he rarely kept in touch with Hesper and would only show up whenever she needed something. He would prepare it and send it over to her.

That happened three years ago. After Hesper left the Duvals, Julian would be targeted if he continued staying at the hospital, so Hesper asked Matthew to give him another chance too.

She knew that Julian was a capable man. He would be able to find a new job because of his qualifications and not because of her words.

One day, Julian suddenly told her that he found a chance to get into medicine and would be working under a professor. However, the only condition to heal Hesper's leg was if Julian could cope with his antics.

That was when Julian cut down on communications with her. Hesper was really touched by that, but she no longer wished for too much knowing the situation of her knee.

Julian was doing what he loved, learning from the renowned doctor, so as a friend, she felt happy for him.

After Hesper was discharged, the first thing she did was enroll Renfrew into a nursery.

Hesper didn't know Genecity as well as Rickard, so the responsibility fell on Rickard.

Renfrew told Ms. Myriade that he was going to school soon. She didn't sound very happy about it because she thought that with his brains, the nursery would be a waste of time and talent.

Renfrew was already a protege in hacking, so learning vocabulary wouldn't be a problem. What would he learn at the nursery? Counting with his fingers?

However, Renfrew explained to her that Hesper wanted him to be like normal children, socializing and learning about life, so he could have many friends.

Ms. Myriade was quiet for the longest time before replying.

Ms. Myriade: I envy you sometimes, Ren.

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Ms. Myriade: You can be a normal child... That's so nice

Renfrew didn't understand the complicated emotions, but Ms. Myriade seemed to think that going to a nursery was a good idea.

"Ren, time to sleep. You'll be going to the nursery tomorrow."

Hesper finished showering and saw Renfrew's blushed cheeks. She couldn't help but give it a kiss, then patted his head while smiling.

"You're a good boy!"

Renfrew blushed more and said goodnight to Ms. Myriade, then place his phone down. "Goodnight Mommy!"

The next day, Rickard waited outside Hesper's home on time. He wasn't in a business suit but rather in sportswear. It looked casual and didn't seem as though he already had a child as old as Renfrew.

Hesper got into the car with the child and saw Rickard in sportswear.

She never saw him wearing that before because he was always in a suit that looked so expensive that people just felt distant from him.

"You look so young today, Daddy!"

Hesper was wearing sportswear too because they were going to school with Renfrew, so there wasn't a need to dress too formally. She wore an off-white outfit that matched Rickard's grey outfit.

Hesper played with Renfrew's hair. Someone was giving out information the previous time, but this time it was a coincidence.

Rickard noticed that and decided to give Benji three months of bonus in his mind.

He was going to wear his usual outfits before leaving. It wasn't difficult for him to pick one that was more casual among all his suits, but when Benji came to get him, he said he should change.

Rickard wasn't very informed about this, so Benji gave him an idea, which made him hesitate, but he ended up changing into sportswear.

"Let's go."

Hesper ignored Rickard's gaze and rubbed Renfrew's hand. Rickard didn't think anything of it.

The idea that they matched took over Rickard's mind. At that moment, he suddenly thought that sending their child to school like a normal couple... was quite nice.

Renfrew wouldn't be like the other kids, crying on the first day of school and asking for their parents, hoping that they could go home. Instead, he held his teacher's hand while carrying his backpack and said goodbye to his parents.

The teacher thought that it was absolutely adorable.

Hesper was worried about him getting used to the environment, but in the end, she was the one who felt longing when she saw Renfrew walking in with the teacher.

"I'll go pick you up later and we'll come over together."

Rickard walked out of the nursery sadly with Hesper. When he turned around, he saw that something was off with Hesper, so he hesitated, then asked, "Aren't you happy about this?"

Hesper couldn't explain how she was feeling to him, because he probably wouldn't understand even after

she told him.

Then she heard Rickard, as if testing the water, say, "Renfrew would have candy when he's unhappy. Do you want to get some too?"

Chapter 178

Hesper didn't know to cry or to laugh. She looked at this man in front of him and felt that she didn't know him anymore.

In his mind, Rickard was a calm and strong man who would be able to solve any problem. He was the symbol of the rise of a business empire because the Duvals peaked under his leadership.

However, the man in front of her now was looking at her with childlike eyes, saying something that even high-schoolers wouldn't say.

He didn't even know what love was, so how could the older Hesper beg for him to stay?

"No, I'm not unhappy."

Renee's car drove over at that moment, so Hesper nodded to him. "You don't need to come to get me later. I'll come over when it's time. I need to go now."

Before Rickard could say anything, she was already in the car.

Renee drove away quickly and pretty much didn't stop longer than needed, as if Rickard was a virus and all she wanted was to get Hesper away as soon as possible.

"Don't worry, he won't do anything to me."

Hesper thought that Renee was funny. Why was everyone acting funny?

Renee knew Hesper's past, so she hated the Duvals. Hesper saved her life, so anyone who harmed her would be a villain to her.

"Your enrollment is done, so you'll be able to start attending lectures from today onward," Renee said. "I'll send the schedule to you later."

This was the best thing to have happened recently. Hesper called Renee the night before and was so excited she couldn't sleep. When she found out that the lecturer for her main subject was her previous lecturer, her emotions were at their peak.

However, she felt guilty because the lecturer was ready to sign her up for a competition, but when Hesper realized that she was pregnant, she immediately gave up on the chance of a lifetime.

The lecturer must have been very disappointed...

Hesper lowered her head and looked at her hands.

These hands once made a design that surprised the lecturer. Maybe she used to have a talent for it, but now... After going through so much, would she still be able to create a good design?

Her enrollment was successful because her file was still in their records, but it showed that she dropped out. All she needed to do was sign up again. The other reason was because of the Lane family name. It was a big name, and Hesper was no longer who she was in the past.

"Professor Jenkins always mentioned you and said that you're one of the most talented students we've ever had."

The counselor was a young new lecturer who looked slightly older than Hesper, so he had never met her before.

It was the first time he saw a woman as pretty as her, so he was a little stunned. Remembering that she dropped out three years ago, the counselor asked, "Why did you drop out with so much talent? Did something happen at home?"

Hesper told Renee not to let anyone know that she was part of the Lane family or there would be unnecessary problems. That was why even the counselor didn't know who she was.

"Yes, I became pregnant," Hesper said, casually dropping a bomb as they walked over to the lecture halls. "I know this place. I used to attend lectures here."

The counselor snapped back to reality when he heard her voice. "Oh, this is still the art faculty, and lectures are ongoing now."

Chapter 179

"The building has been refurbished, so it might be different from what you remembered."

The facilities at Genecity University weren't too bad because they would get new supplies every year, but she never saw them fully refurbish a building. Hesper realized how much the 'refurbishment' was when she walked into the building.

It was as though everything except the frame of the building was new. Outsiders would think that it was a different school.

"I remembered that the Duval Group sponsored to refurbish the art faculty. Other than this building, that one had a facelift too."

Hesper froze in her steps.

"Duval Group?"

Seeing her reaction, the counselor explained. "I don't know a lot of details because this doesn't concern me... But I heard people saying that one of the Duvals studied here."

There wasn't anyone from the family who studied here.

Emotions rose in Hesper's heart.

Did Ernest refurbish the place while she was pregnant so she could be surprised when she resumed her studies?

But... she didn't stay there for long and didn't get to spend time with Ernest.

She didn't see all this.

Ever since her return to Genecity, Hesper hadn't met Ernest. She didn't want to talk about what happened in the past, nor did she want to make Ernest feel guilty because of her. However, walking around campus made Hesper feel sad.

"Hesper?"

A familiar voice came from behind her. Hesper turned around and saw a woman holding a box of paint and looking at her with a shocked expression.

"It's really you, Hesper!"

Her memories came back. The excited woman before her matched someone from her memory. The woman pushed the box into the counselor's arms and rushed over to give Hesper a big hug.

"It's been so long. I thought I would never see you again!"

Hesper stretched out her hands and awkwardly patted the girl's back.

"I'm back, Jess."

This bubbly woman was Hesper's best friend and roommate, Jessie Jenkins, daughter of Professor Jenkins.

Ever since Hesper got married and moved out of their dorm, she attended fewer and fewer classes and spent less time with Jessie.

Remembering how they would wake up early just to get food from the cafeteria, they seemed to have gone back to four years ago and Hesper's eyes turned red.

Jessie let go of Hesper and looked at her from head to toe, then pouted and said, "Do you know

my

dad

almost cursed you to death? I didn't dare bring you up in front of him these past few years."

Jessie didn't ask her anything, but that made Hesper feel even guiltier.

Chapter 180

The time that was supposed to be for her to get to know the campus turned into a time for Jessie to bring Hesper around while the counselor walked behind them with a box.

“Isn’t the paint needed now?” Hesper was used to Jessie’s enthusiasm, but now it was a little too much. for her. “Why are you here? To see Professor Jenkins?”

Jessie waved her hand. “I stayed to work as a tutor after graduation because my dad says my art is questionable, so I shouldn’t show it to the public.”

Hesper was amused.

Jessie didn’t want to get into art at first, but Professor Jenkins wanted someone to follow in his footsteps, so he trained her since she was a child to make sure that she did. Maybe because he was too stubborn in the past, but now he could tell that Jessie really wasn’t interested in designing. Even though she had immaculate skills, she had no inspiration.

After all, artistic creation requires enthusiasm, and Jessie wasn’t cut out for this, as she herself admitted.

The counselor knew how she was, so he just followed them around. Hesper felt sorry for him because he was her counselor, but she was helpless.

“You can give those to me, and Jess can show me around campus. I’m sure you have work to do.”

The counselor gave her a grateful look. “Yes, I do. Thanks for the help, Ms. Jenkins!”

Hesper took the box from him and the counselor quickly escaped. Jessie crossed her arms and chuckled.

“You’re still so kind.”

Hesper was surprised as she hugged the box because the smell of paint gave her a sense of reality.

“Everything has changed...” Hesper looked at Jessie and chuckled, but it sounded like a sigh.

She was no longer the same as she was four years ago

Professor Jenkins was teaching courses at another university, so after Hesper was done with her enrollment process, she still hadn’t met him. The first day was a bit of a rush, and since she wasn’t ready to meet him, she was relieved.

“I’ve sent you my address so you can come to see me when you have time.” Jessie waved her phone. What I regret most in the past was not telling you where I lived. When I first lost contact with you, I thought I would never see you again.”

Hesper felt a little guilty, but there was no point in bringing up the past. Jessie had a natural instinct when it came to this and never once asked her about it since they reunited.

“Alright, I’ll go see you.” Hesper smiled. “I’ve sent my address to you too. I’ll make some nice food when

you come over.”

Renee’s car was parked outside the campus. Jessie looked at the Lincoln and raised her brows at Hesper.

Hesper nodded because she didn’t want to hide it from her. “I’ll visit the professor and you. Let’s meet more often, my little Professor Jenkins.”

Hesper looked down as Renee drove away. There was some paint on the corner of her shirt and it felt as though she was in a different world.

“You look really happy.”

Hesper didn’t deny it and smiled. “I just suddenly feel as I’ve been reborn. I’ve lived for over twenty years, and today, I finally realize that there is a meaning to life!”

She had friends, a passion, and something to chase after.

Renee could understand that feeling. Before she met Hesper, life was meaningless, but now, seeing Hesper safe and successful was her meaning in life.

When they arrived at the nursery, Rickard’s car was there and he was waiting outside.

He was still in sportswear, but since Hesper’s clothes had paint on them, she changed into a different outfit so they wouldn’t match anymore.