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## The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 36 - 40

"Ian, why didn't you answer my question? Why did you come down when I clearly told you to stay upstairs? You've been getting more disobedient lately!" When Sebastian found out Matteo had sneaked out of the lounge, he cut his meeting short and came right over to give his son a good scolding. Matteo felt wronged in all ways, but he could not say anything. He desperately wanted to say he was not the son Sebastian was looking for. However, there was nothing he could do. He totally did not expect Ian to go down. He sat on the couch and rested his face on his palms, exasperated. "Could you please give me some peace, Daddy? I'm so frustrated right now. I just want to have some freedom! I'm already five.

You can't keep me indoors my whole life!" "What did you say?" Sebastian sat up straight when he heard what Matteo said. To him, Ian was a quiet kid. He was never a child that talked much, neither would he tell others about his feelings. Ian had always been a withdrawn child. Even when he was angry, he would just lock himself in his room. Sebastian was befuddled when he heard Ian said he was frustrated from the lack of freedom, and that he wanted to go out and play? A frown carved between the man's brows as he got off the chair and walked over. He knew something was wrong. "Look at me, Ian. Did the doctor say anything to you?" "Huh?" Matteo looked up at him and blinked his eyes innocently at his father. Sebastian's frown intensified. "

I mean the doctor who came in the morning. Did she say anything to you? Why did you suddenly follow her to the company? What happened?" If Matteo had not known Sebastian was talking about his mother, he would well have thought the man was referring to an evil woman from his interrogative tone. There was enmity and hatred written all over his face as if the woman meant harm to his child. *So, this is how you bully Mommy all the time? So much for being a man. You deserted a woman and two children, and now you're talking about her as if she's the bad person here.* Matteo's heartbeat quickened as he leaped off from the couch. He stood right up in front of Sebastian and glared at him. "What do you mean, Daddy? What did she do? She took care of you and brought me here. Did she do anything wrong? Who are you to question her like this?"

Completely dumbfounded, Sebastian never his son could argue! He would always wallow in his own corner when he was angry, and he would not speak to anyone. Since when did he learn to talk back to his father? "I'm not questioning her behavior. I'm simply reminding you to not be over-trusting of other people!" "Other people? You sound like she's an outsider, but she's actually the person who treats me the nicest!" Matteo shouted at the top of his voice. He was fuming with anger right now. He went past Sebastian and shot towards the door. *What a meanie! I don't need a Daddy like him! How dare he speak badly of Mommy in front of*

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*me? She's the best person on earth. I'd rather not have this Daddy if it meant I'd lose Mommy!* Matteo ran towards the door with incipient tears welling up in his eyes. Sebastian was frantic with worry. He was about to run after Matteo when he saw the boy bumped right into Luke, who happened to come in. "What's wrong, Mr. Hayes? Why did you make Ian cry?" Luke quickly shut the door behind him, preventing Matteo from running out of the room. Sebastian got on his feet and went to Matteo before squatting down in front of him, holding his shoulders awkwardly. "Ian, I'm sorry. It's my fault. I shouldn't badmouth her like that. Will you forgive Daddy?" Matteo was definitely not expecting an apology. As he came to think of it, Sebastian was not entirely mean. After all, he had his own ways of bringing up his child. He was incredibly objective when it came to matters concerning what was right and wrong. The man would apologize if he was at fault, even if he was the father. Sebastian knew he should not be biased towards Sasha. Although that woman had her faults, she was still a responsible doctor. She cared for him, and she genuinely loved the child. He should not have doubted her.

Sebastian picked up the crying child and went back to the couch. Over on the other side, Ian was equally shocked to find himself in a bizarre situation. He was forced into a cab and brought to a preschool. Everything was so unexpected that he did not even know how to react. "We're lucky we got back just in time, Matt. It's almost time for Mommy to pick us up." Vivian held Ian's hand as she talked about how she got her brother back from Hayes Corporation to their preschool with Mrs. Grint's help. She was feeling so proud of herself she did not even notice the expression on Ian's face. He was someone who valued his personal space highly. He did not like people invading his space, neither did he like people touching him. But ever since he got on the cab, the little girl kept touching him with her chubby hands, and she even clung to him and talked to him in his ears. At first, he was petrified, but after some time, he grew numb to all her advances.

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"Why is Mommy coming?" Ian probed. "Cause it's a holiday, Matt! Have you forgotten? It's Wednesday and the preschool is only open for half a day. Our teacher said they need to sanitize the place, so we must go home. That's why I called Mrs. Grint and asked her to get you before time," Vivian replied happily, still feeling proud of herself for saving her brother in time. Matteo had given her Mrs. Grint's phone number beforehand, so Vivian called the nanny and asked for her help to go look for Matteo. She held Ian's hand and skipped lightly into their classroom with him. Their teacher spotted them and waved at them.

"Hey, Vivian, I see you've got your brother. Come on, you two, get your bags and be ready to go home. Your mom's almost here. Let's go." "Yes!" Vivian's crispy voice rang loud and clear beside Ian's ears. He rolled his eyes as the girl went ahead and grabbed her bag. Despite being exasperated, Ian found his surroundings intriguing. He had never been to a preschool,

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and all this was totally new to him. Actually, it was not like he did not attend preschool at all. He attended the best preschool in Avenport. The environment there was impeccable; the facilities were top-notch, and the children came from affluent families. His teachers were never down to earth and the kids there were never friendly. To be precise, it was almost impossible to make any friends. Ian let Vivian had her way with him as she put Matteo's bag on his back and they followed their teacher out to the entrance. "

Mommy's here!" Seeing Sasha from afar, Vivian squealed at the top of her voice as she ran towards her mother. Once again, Ian went speechless. His gaze trailed her steps, and he suddenly stopped at the door. *Huh? Isn't this the doctor who came to the house in the morning? I just parted ways with her in front of Daddy's company. What's she doing here? She's their mother?* Ian was confounded as he looked at the two of them hugging each other. "Matt, what are you waiting for? Come to me! We're going home," Sasha cried out to him and waved enthusiastically when she realized Ian was standing still. *What's wrong with Matt today. Why isn't he smiling? Is he angry? Was I late?* Sasha let go of Vivian and came over to check if Matteo was okay. "What's wrong, Matt? Are you angry with me? Is it because I'm late? I'm so sorry Matt. I didn't know y'all are ending early today.

I got here right after I got the call. Please don't be angry, okay?" Sasha held out her hand and reached for his head, wanting to pat his head. But Ian shied away instinctively, avoiding her touch. Her hand froze in the air. For a moment, she thought the boy standing in front of her was not Matteo, but the boy she saw in the morning. "Matt?" "I can walk over on my own," Ian told her coldly. He did not take another look at her but walked past her towards Vivian, leaving Sasha behind as she turned around stiffly. "Matt, are you really angry? But I have already apologized. What about I make it up to you? I'll get you ice cream. It's your favorite." Beside Ian, Vivian clapped and jumped about in joy while he looked at her apathetically from the corner of his eyes. "Yay! Mommy, I want a strawberry flavor ice-cream. Oh! Can we also have a hotdog? I miss it so much!"

After getting groceries, Sasha brought the two kids back to their rental apartment. By the time they reached home, Vivian and Ian had already finished their ice-cream and hotdogs. They even had a freshly baked egg tart. "Wasn't that a good treat, Matt?" Vivian looked at her brother with a pleasant smile on her face. Looking at how the girl was caressing her belly and licking her lips, Ian could tell she was a complete foodie. He wondered if this was what the two siblings did every day. Ian looked at the remaining egg tart in his hand, not knowing if he should eat it. He looked at the tasty snack and could not resist it anymore. He opened his mouth wide and munched away, savoring the delicacy with a satisfied nod. He had never tried anything that delicious in his life. His father did not allow him to have any of these because he said they were unhealthy.

That was why all Ian had ever tasted was home-cooked food. He had eaten none of the food sold outside. Sasha looked at the two happy children and decided to let them have some fun on their own while she went into the kitchen to cook. The telephone rang in the living

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area when she was busy preparing food. "Matt, can you help me pick up the phone? See who's on the call. I'm cooking!" she shouted from the kitchen. Ian looked at the telephone on the TV shelf and went over reluctantly. "Hello?" he said as he picked up the receiver. "Ian?" the voice from the other end called out. Ian was startled that the person had called him by his name. "Who are you?" he whispered cautiously. "I'm Matt! You're at my house now, right? Mommy and Vivian are calling you 'Matt', aren't they?" Ian could not help but notice the voice from the receiver sounded like his. It was playful and light, just like how those little foxes in the cartoons sounded like. *Matt? So, this is the Matt they have been mistaking me for?* Ian finally understood everything, and gloom set on his face.

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"What's happening? Why am I here? And where are you right now?" Ian questioned impatiently. "I'm at your house, Ian. We look exactly the same, that's why everyone blundered! If I'm correct, I think we're twins," Matteo said solemnly. "Twins?" Ian repeated after him. His two hands gripped the receiver as he tried to make sense of what he just heard. "Yes, we're twins. I went to your dad's office today to look for him because he bullied Mommy. But after I got there, everyone started calling me 'Ian'. Even your dad got it wrong. That's why I think we're twins." "Are you sure?" Ian asked again. "Yeah! Of course! Think about it. I'm sure Mommy and Vivi thought you were Matteo too, right? That means we really look the same! And only twins look the same, isn't it?" Matteo insisted. Ian fell into silence. *What he said is right.* But Ian still had his doubts. He craned his neck and looked at Sasha cooking in the kitchen, and recalled having a blast with Vivian, eating all the food he had never tried before. His face turned sour before he finally spoke again. "If we're really twins, why did she abandon me? Daddy even said she died." "What?" Matteo blurted out in surprise. *What is he talking about? Is he talking about Mommy? Is he blaming Mommy right now? And he even said Mommy's dead!* "Hey! Daddy is a liar! Mommy's not dead! Mommy also told us Daddy's dead. But is he?" Once again, Ian was rendered speechless. He puffed his cheeks and sulked as he thought about those two annoying adults who had lied. Meanwhile, Matteo cleared his throat, getting ready to brief Ian about their plan of action. "Things are complicated between the adults, so we should take whatever they say with a pinch of salt. What we need to do right now is find out why they went their ways. We also have to find out why both of us ended up separated." "That's a clever idea, but how are we gonna do it?" Ian asked. "Hm... Lemme think... What about we meet up first?"

I think it's just a matter of time before Daddy and Mommy realize something's off. We need to go back to our respective homes before they find out." Ian contemplated his suggestion in silence before giving him an answer. *Mommy already knew about my existence, but I doubt Daddy knows about Matteo and Vivian, else he would have demanded that she let him*

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meet them. Matteo's right. We need to keep things the way they are and make sure none of them finds out. "Alright, let's meet," Ian finally agreed. "Matt, Vivi! Time to eat! I made pork ribs and fried chicken. They are your favorite!" Sasha's called out for the children when she was done cooking. Matteo heard her from the phone and a blissful smile curved on his bright little eyes.

"Alright, off you go, Ian. I think Mommy's calling you. You've never really spent time with her, so enjoy your time at home. She's the best person in the entire world. I'm sure you'll like her!" Ian smacked his lips and glared at the receiver before slamming it back on the switch hook. "Who called, Matt?" Sasha was putting the plates on the table when she realized Ian looked upset. "I don't know. Just some random stranger," he answered gloomily. "Okay..." Sasha was busy setting up the table and decided to just drop the topic. "Come over, Matt. Have some spaghetti. And here are your favorite pork ribs." Beside her, Vivian clung to Sasha's leg and looked at her with watery eyes. "What about me, Mommy? I want my favorite fried chicken too!"

"Of course, sweetie! Come, get a seat. Let's you a big piece of fried chicken." It was such a heartwarming scene—the mother and two children gathered around the table for a meal. The apartment was plain and was not the very least luxurious. It did not have the opulence of Royal Court One at Frontier Bay, but it had the warmth of a family. It was just another usual day where the family got around for a simple meal—yet they found joy in the simple pleasures of life. This was not something Ian had ever experienced in the cold and empty house back at Frontier Bay. Ian lowered his head and looked at the mountain of food on his plate and dug in—his heart was full. Meanwhile, Matteo was also having lunch with his family today. Sebastian cooked, and the two sat quietly at the table as they ate. Halfway through the meal, Berta came over and announced the arrival of a guest. "Mr. Hayes, Ms. Green's here. She brought some honey lemonade for Ian."

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*Ms. Green? Who is that? She made honey lemonade for that little bore?* Matteo tilted his head curiously and looked at Berta, and then at his father, who seemed displeased about the unwelcomed guest. "I didn't ask her to come. Send her back," Sebastian rejected coldly. "But she made the honey lemonade herself, and she brought it all the way here, Mr. Hayes. You know how bad Ian's cough gets in the winter. Only honey lemonade works for him, so why not just let Ms. Green in?" Berta was trying all she could to persuade Sebastian. The hard look on the latter's face softened a little after hearing what she said.

It was true that he had a short temper, but in matters related to Ian's health, he would always be extra careful. He knew his son's seasonal cough had long been a bugging problem, so he finally caved and allowed Berta to let Xandra in. "Hi, Sebastian. Hi, Ian. Y'all having lunch?" Xandra greeted them on her way in. She was wearing an off-white sweater on top of a beige

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plaid winter skirt. Without any heavy makeup on her face, she looked a little pale and tired. "Are you okay, Ms. Green? You don't look well!" Berta quickly came over and took the bag of honey lemonade from her hands. "I'm fine, Berta. I was down with a little cold two days ago," Xandra assured her, shaking her head as her gaze wandered towards Sebastian. She was hoping he could look at her, but Sebastian remained unmoved and continued eating. He saw Matteo looking at Xandra and knocked his knuckles against the table. "

Eat, Ian." "Okay." Matteo picked up his spoon and resumed his meal. *Who is this woman? She doesn't look like she's poor though. But why is she dressed like this? It's so cold in the winter! I bet she's putting up a front to gain Daddy's sympathy. She's so dramatic!* A subtle smile broke across his lips as Matteo continued eating. Xandra stood on one side with her face downcast when Sebastian ignored her. She drew closer to the dining table and pulled out a pair of wool gloves from her handbag.

"Remember to take the honey lemonade, Ian? I also made you a pair of gloves for the winter. You wanted me to make you a pair, didn't you? Try it on." It was a big deal for someone of Xandra's standing to make a pair of wool gloves for someone else. Berta came over and checked out the gloves. "These are exquisite, Ms. Green! I can't believe you made them yourselves! This is much better than the ones sold in the stores. Check this out, Mr. Hayes, the handiwork is splendid!" The housemaid fondled the gloves and went towards Sebastian, who cocked his head aside and took a cursory glance at the gloves. It went without a doubt that they were beautifully made.

From the design and the details, Sebastian could tell that Xandra spent a lot of time making them. It looked fluffy and comfortable, and the size was just nice. His tense brows relaxed as he retracted his gaze and continued eating. Xandra came over and picked the gloves up before turning towards Matteo. "Ian, why don't I put them on for you?" "Sure," Matteo said with a wide smile as he reached out his hands towards Xandra. *These are not mine anyway. I'll just accept them on Ian's behalf.* But just when Xandra was done putting on the gloves for Matteo, a cry came from outside. Someone had barged in unannounced. "Sebastian Hayes! I heard Little Ian's back? Is he okay?" *Mommy?* Matteo swiftly withdrew his hands when he heard Sasha's voice, while Sebastian and Xandra were caught by surprise. Sebastian rolled his eyes when he realized it was Sasha.

As for Xandra, her face contorted in hatred at the sound of that woman. *Sasha Wand! Why must you come now?* When Sasha found out from Luke that he almost lost Ian in the morning, she freaked out and hurried over to see if everything was okay. But she went berserk when she saw Xandra in the house. "Why are you here? Sebastian Hayes! Did you let her in?" Sasha's gleaming glare pierced through Xandra the moment she saw that evil woman. She could not believe that after all she had done to make Sebastian promise to keep that woman away from Ian, Xandra was still given permission to come near her son. *What on earth is going on? Why is she here?* Sasha eyed the pair of pink indoor slippers under Xandra's feet, and her frown deepened. *Is she having lunch with them right now?*

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*What's that on Ian's hands? Gloves? She's even allowed to touch my son?* The scene put a stake through her heart and Sasha felt like her heart was going to explode with anger.

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"Sasha Wand, are you mad? Who asked you to come again? This is not your house! How can you come and go as you like?" Clenching his teeth, Sebastian finally unleashed his wrath upon Sasha while glaring at her with burning rage in his eyes. It was as if he had a strong urge to rip her apart. *Daddy is scolding Mommy again!* Matteo was displeased at the sight of Sasha being chided by Sebastian, and he was about to come to her rescue by voicing up for her. Out of everyone's expectation, Xandra said abruptly, "Sebastian, cool down. Ms. Wand is your doctor now. There must be a reason for her to be here. Don't treat her this way." The next moment, she walked toward Sasha with a cheerful smile on her face.

"Ms. Wand, is there something I can help you with? Why don't you join us for lunch? You haven't taken your meal, right? I'll get the housemaid to bring you a plate and a set of cutlery. We can continue to chat while eating." She stood in front of Sasha, giving off the vibe of a dignified and graceful lady from a prestigious family. From the way she instructed the housemaid, it was as if she was the mistress of the villa. Sasha clenched her fist as her expression darkened. "Never mind, I've taken my meal. I'm here because I heard from Luke that Little Ian almost got lost when I brought him to the Hayes today. That's why I wanted to come and check if he's fine." "Ah! So you're here because of that. Don't worry, Ian's fine. He just doesn't like to communicate with people and prefers to keep everything to himself. I guess he must have been looking for his daddy at that time but accidentally walked in the wrong direction. Everything is alright now, Ms. Wand," Xandra comforted Sasha gently. Upon hearing this,

Sasha could not hold back her rage any longer. Her dainty face turned pale in an instant. She could conceal her feelings toward that scum perfectly well in front of Xandra, yet she could not remain indifferent when the cunning woman sounded as if she genuinely cared about her son. *No way, Ian is my son! He is my flesh and blood!* If anyone were to snatch her role as her son's mother, she would surely go mad! "Alright. Since he's fine, I'll make a move first," Sasha replied coldly, then turned and prepared to leave at once. "Ms. Wand, you don't have to be shy. Since you're already here, just take a seat and join us. It doesn't matter that you've taken your meal. You can still eat some salad since it's not that filling. Don't be intimidated by Sebastian's hot temper." Sasha did not expect that Xandra would insist that she stayed for lunch. However, before she could respond

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, Xandra grabbed hold of her hand and led her to the dining table. Sasha was rendered speechless. *What is this b\*tch trying to do?* Once seated, she tried her best to suppress the growing discomfort and uneasiness within her. Keeping her head lowered, she tried to avoid having any eye contact with the man seated opposite her. She was worried that a single glance at the scum would trigger her anger, causing her to smash the plate and storm out of the villa in front of her son. She really did not wish for things to end up like that. "Ms. Nancy, are you here to visit me?" "Ah? Y-Yeah!" Sasha stammered. She was stunned, looking at the little boy who suddenly appeared beside her. *Mommy's really dumb! That woman is bullying her, yet she still doesn't know how to retaliate.* Matteo sat down next to his mommy and waved at the housemaid opposite him. "I want to sit here. Bring me my plate." "Huh? You want to sit there?" Everyone was dumbfounded upon hearing his words, including Sebastian who had a puzzled expression on his face. "Why are you sitting there? Go back to your seat at once!

"The surprise in Sebastian became rage almost immediately as he yelled at Matteo. However, Matteo was unwilling to move back to his original seat. *This is my mommy. If I don't protect her when she's being ganged up on, who else would?* Mimicking Ian's facial expression, Matteo glanced at the man seated opposite him with indifference and said resolutely, "I'm not going back there. Since Ms. Nancy is here to visit me today, I want to sit next to her." Next, he turned to look at his mommy and asked politely, "Ms. Nancy, I want to eat that. Can you get some for me?" "Sure, I will take some for you now!" Exhilarated, Sasha's eyes started to well up. She immediately took a huge portion of the dish as requested by him and put it on his plate.

"Ms. Nancy, thank you." "You're welcome. Dig in!" Instantaneously, pin-drop silence ensued in the dining room. Everyone at the table became motionless like statues! All the housemaids were dumbfounded. They had never seen Ian talking coquettishly to anyone before or request anyone to serve him food. After all, he was a clean freak, just like his daddy! He would never want anything that had been touched by someone else. *This is absurd! I can't believe it!* Things were becoming more unbearable for Xandra. Her fingernails were digging into the flesh of her palms, and there was immense hatred in her eyes as she stared at both Sasha and her son. The cheerful smile had totally vanished from her face, replaced by a scowl. On the other hand, Sebastian was also burning with rage. *D\*mn! She managed to influence Ian in just one day! What is she really up to? Is she planning to snatch my son away from me? Well, she can dream on!*

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