

Departure with a Belly Chapter 111

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Chapter 111

Compared to Alaric's restlessness, Victoria seemed much calmer. "Let's go. Let's not delay Grandma's check-up."

Without any outsiders present, she didn't put on an act, and it made her sound and look completely different.

When she finished speaking, she realized that he wasn't moving. She frowned slightly. She hadn't wanted to separate herself from him so soon, but his words were far too annoying, so she couldn't help herself. The results from Griselda's checkup weren't certain at all and Victoria had been far too hasty.

At that thought, she took a deep breath and was about to turn to speak to him when the car suddenly set off at a great speed. She was extremely shocked and turned to look at Alaric, seeing that he was driving with a completely dark expression while exuding intense rage.

For some reason, she felt herself tearing up as great sadness rose inside her. What is he doing? I didn't do anything wrong at all, so why do I have to bear all of this?

How is his relationship with Claudia any of my business? He was the one to suggest

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marriage as well as divorce, even asking me to abort the child. He has been the one controlling everything, so why is he angry with me?

Her tears welled up and she turned to look outside the window before they could fall. She leaned backward and turned her head up slightly so her tears would accumulate without trickling out.

Never mind. Just let it be. We probably can't even be friends anymore. What other choice is there? I shouldn't have fallen for him.

The car went at a high speed before Alaric calmed down enough to let it return to a normal speed. When they arrived at the hospital and got out of the car, he saw that her eyes were red as if she had been crying. His stormy mood abated at once after seeing this.

As Victoria was about to step inside the hospital, he caught her wrist. "Were you crying?"

She did not even turn her head. "No."

He frowned. Her voice sounded normal and did not seem suspicious, yet her eyes were as red as that of a rabbit's.

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Why is she crying? Is it because I drove too fast?

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As Alaric considered this, he felt her hand trying to free itself. He lost focus for a while before gripping her wrist tighter.

Remembering what his mother had said, he pursed his lips to form a straight line. "It was my fault just now."

www.

Victoria, who had already calmed down, felt herself tear up again and nearly couldn't stop her tears. "I don't need you to apologize. Let go."

She tried to draw her hand back, but he continued gripping it tightly, not letting go no matter how hard she struggled. Alaric wasn't sure if he was mistaken, but he could feel the sadness radiating from the back of her head. The emotions which had tormented him reached their peak and he opened his mouth, about to say something.

"There you are, Mr. and Mrs. Cadogan." Two familiar nurses came out of the rehabilitation center at that moment and greeted them voluntarily.

Alaric frowned, not expecting outsiders to interrupt them. Meanwhile, Victoria took the opportunity to completely shake him off and moved forward to talk to the two

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nurses. Their attention was drawn to her immediately and they did not even notice

him being angry.

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After another ten minutes, Adrian's car arrived as well. Since the chauffeur had been the one driving, not to mention that Griselda was in it, the car moved extremely stably.

As soon as Adrian alighted from the car, he shot a disapproving glance at his son and scolded sternly, "Why did you drive so recklessly? It's fine if you are alone, but Victoria is there with you."

After reprimanding his son, Adrian went off to check on Victoria. Mary came forward while pushing Griselda's wheelchair as she shot her son a look. Seeing his dark expression made her snort inwardly before she shook her head. I gave him my secret weapon, but he still ended up like this. He deserves that.

On the other hand, Griselda, who was sitting in the wheelchair, seemed to have sensed something too and couldn't help asking, "They seem to have some issues since their emotions seem too unusual."

Mary paused before realizing what Griselda was worried about. After pondering for

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a second, she chuckled. "Mom, the younger generation likes to wear each other out. You don't have to be too concerned. Back in the day, Adrian and I would also argue every few days. I would either think he didn't care enough about me or that he

wasn't being considerate enough. To be brief, their personalities will surely cause some friction when they get together before eventually becoming compatible."

"Your words make sense, but..." Griselda couldn't help worrying and decided to tell Mary about Claudia after some consideration. Her daughter-in-law was smart and would definitely find a way. If this could be dealt with, then Griselda didn't have to worry about it.

Claudia...

Griselda couldn't really do much about her. It would be easier if Claudia had been any other girl, yet she was someone their family was indebted to, and it made things complex. It wouldn't be morally fitting if the family made Alaric ignore Claudia since he couldn't ignore her or even treat her frigidly. Instead, he had to be warm toward her. Such a relationship was hard to resolve as their elders.

After hearing what Griselda had to say, Mary did not seem too worried. "So, you're worried about that, Mom? I don't think you have to be so concerned. Alaric may be

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slower on the uptake, but he definitely knows what he wants."

Griselda wasn't reassured and sighed instead. "I agree with the latter, but I'm worried about Victoria getting hurt."

Mary looked instinctively toward Victoria. The young woman was wearing an azure-colored long coat paired with a cream blouse underneath, with her

waist-length hair gathered into a low ponytail. When she lowered her head, several strands of hair came loose from its sides to conceal her flawless face, making her look more delicate.

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The nurse was saying something to Victoria, and she nodded slightly before smiling. She looked to be smiling, but she seemed sad and unhappy for an unknown reason. At that point, Mary, who had always been optimistic, couldn't help but frown too. She initially felt she didn't have to worry since she thought her son knew what he wanted, so there would not be an issue. However, Griselda's reminder made her realize she hadn't considered Victoria's feelings. Victoria had emotions and would feel unhappy or hurt too.

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Only Griselda could go inside for her check-up, so the others had to wait outside. Alaric leaned against the window, instinctively feeling inside his pocket before recalling faintly that he hadn't touched cigarettes in a very long time. It seemed that he hadn't changed the habit of wanting to smoke whenever he felt anxious. He didn't really smoke much before, but it was about a year ago that he completely quit smoking. It was after he and Victoria had accidentally slept together and he couldn't forget her body and scent. It was as if he was addicted to it. He started to kiss her from time to time, which happened anywhere and anytime since he refused to lose any opportunities for that.

Alaric had once joined an hours-long meeting where the contents put him in a horrible mood, so he started to smoke after returning to the conference room. After just a few puffs, Victoria came in with some documents and became concerned at the sight of him smoking. "Why are you smoking now? Are you in a bad mood?" He did not answer and only stared darkly at her. Their relationship had still been close back then, so she wasn't afraid of his frigid expression and quickly went

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forward to grab the cigarette. However, she did not succeed and ended up being dragged onto his lap.

After settling on his lap, she decided to play along and put her hands on his shoulders. "Don't be angry. Even if you are unhappy, it has already passed."

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Victoria's mouth opened and closed in front of him while she chattered on, glimmering so seductively that Alaric's gaze became darker as she continued. He lifted a hand and held her chin before kissing her, and she froze for an instant before kissing back.

They kissed passionately in the office and when it ended, she leaned against him as she panted. "Doesn't feel good," she mumbled.

"What doesn't?" Alaric's voice was terribly hoarse. His first reaction was that he hadn't kissed her well enough and she wasn't satisfied with this.

Her eyes were shiny while her mouth was still swollen. "The cigarette."

He then realized she was referring to his cigarette, and he immediately stuck it on the ashtray and extinguished it.

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She pouted. "Not like that."

The tips of his fingers moved against her cheek and the pads of his fingers lingered on her ruined lipstick as he murmured, "Not like that? Then, how?"

"I meant that you shouldn't smoke anymore," Victoria answered, pulling on his necktie in annoyance. "You knew that already but asked me that on purpose."

"Oh?" Alaric laughed quietly and leaned toward her. "So, you meant that it feels good and you enjoy it when I don't smoke?"

Victoria was speechless upon hearing that. "When did I say I enjoyed it? Don't flatter yourself, all right?"

"You don't enjoy it, hmm? Then, who was the one that kept asking me to kiss her after having too much to drink?"

"Alaric!"

Her pouty voice and the good times they had together seemed to have happened yesterday, and only the cold wall stood before him when he came back to the present. They had been giving each other the silent treatment for a long time.

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Alaric looked toward Victoria where she was sitting beside his mother as they discussed something with their heads close together

His phone vibrated inside his pocket at that moment, the ringtone making everyone look toward him. He recovered and took it out. After looking at the call notification, he pursed his lips and looked instinctively at Victoria, who was coincidentally looking at him. Their gazes met for a second before she discreetly shifted hers

away.

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After Alaric's phone rang for several seconds, he hung up and muted it, causing silence to fall once again, Mary understood everything from her son's reaction, since he would have picked it up had it been important. However, he had glanced instinctively at Victoria after looking at the screen and didn't take the call either, which meant the caller was most probably Claudia.

Mary lamented Alaric's incompetence before looking at Victoria, whose eyes were lowered. Victoria didn't seem affected by it, though no one knew what she was thinking.

After the call was cut off, Claudia froze in disbelief. This was the first time Alaric had hung up on her.

Why? Is it because my face is about to be ruined so his feelings have changed? I'm his savior, no? Even if my beauty is truly ruined, he should not treat me like that since he would always take my calls immediately.

Elaine was beside Claudia and immediately complained after seeing her unhappy look. "That vixen Victoria must have seduced him! Why else would Alaric not pick up?"

Claudia bit her lower lip. "Stop talking."

"Why not, Claudia? Hasn't she made a promise to you? See how it turned out. She is someone untrustworthy. You helped her out before, yet she stole your man. Why do you think she will fulfill her promise?"

Claudia bit her lip, holding her phone tightly without speaking.

“Claudia, stop being so kind. The most terrifying thing is that she’s pregnant and has said that she will get a divorce after Old Mrs. Cadogan’s operation is finished. Have you ever thought about why Old Mrs. Cadogan’s operation has suddenly been delayed? Why was she so healthy before but suddenly became so weak? Doesn’t

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Victoria have a hand in all this? She’s been Mrs. Cadogan for so long, so why would she give up on that role so easily? It’s impossible. Stop being so trustful, Claudia.” Elaine’s words were difficult to take in, yet Claudia felt they were all true. If Victoria really wanted to fulfill her promise, why did she not sign the contract with Claudia? Victoria’s unwillingness to sign the contract was proof of her not wanting to hold up her side of the deal. Many people would go back on anything they had agreed to verbally, so what could Claudia do besides scold Victoria if Victoria really did renege on their agreement?

As Claudia was immersed in her thoughts, the door opened as one of her close friends came in. “Bad news, Claudia. I bumped into Christopher on the way up, and he has bought flowers to visit you. I don’t know where he got the information, but I didn’t let him up.”

Claudia was in a bad mood and felt speechless after hearing his name.

Elaine rolled her eyes. “Is Christopher crazy? Hasn’t Claudia already turned him down? What does he want?”

Claudia was about to tell them to find an excuse to make him leave, but another

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person chimed in, “Exactly. What can a rascal like him do besides cause trouble? I don’t know where he found the courage to pursue Claudia. Does he think she will ever consider him?”

She felt like she had heard the most important thing then. Cause trouble, huh?

Her dejected gaze brightened once again. She had hated Christopher immensely before since she felt he damaged her reputation, but she hadn’t felt so grateful for his arrival ever before.

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Elaine shot to her feet.

“Is he still downstairs? I’ll chase him away. Honestly, what a delusional upstart.”

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Just as she was about to leave the room, Claudia called out to her.

“Wait.”

“Claudia?”

To Elaine’s surprise, Claudia smiled and gently said, “Let him in.”

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Everyone in the ward stared at her in shock as they all cried out at the same time.

“Claudia?” they shrieked.

“Did you forget what he did to you?” Elaine exclaimed. “Christopher Drevel is a ruffian. If you let him in, you’ll...”

“Elaine,” Claudia interrupted in a soft voice. “No matter what he did to me before, I am now hurt. If he knew of that and came here to visit me at the hospital, that

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means he cares about me. Should I not be touched by someone capable of showing me such concern? How could I chase him away?"

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Everyone else disagreed with that sentiment.

"Claudia, he doesn't care about you. He likes you. If you acknowledge him, he will only get worse. Let's ignore him, please?"

"Yes, Claudia. I know you are so nice that you think he's being nice by visiting you, but why would he visit you unless he had an ulterior motive in mind?"

"Harden your heart. What if he does something to you?"

However, Claudia was unexpectedly stubborn that day. "He wouldn't do anything to

1. me. I know you're concerned about me, but he's really here to visit me. Let him come

in."

Seeing that they were going to continue protesting, she smiled and added, "Alright. I've made up my mind. You can stop."

When they realized there was no way to convince her, they had no choice but to call Christopher in.

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Still, that did not stop them from grumbling as they went.

"What's going on with Claudia? She hates Christopher, right? Why would she let him in?"

"Perhaps she changed her mind due to how bad her injuries are. Somehow, that made her think he's really here just to visit her."

"Oh, I just don't understand her."

They headed downstairs to find Christopher still waiting with a floral bouquet. He

was a thug, someone who knew Claudia in school but had long since dropped out.

However, he continued to bother her after dropping out.

He only stopped when she moved abroad where he could not follow her.

Recently, he had somehow heard about Claudia's return and was back to harass her.

He was quite handsome but with an alcoholic father, a mother who worked at a massage parlor, and no proper job of his own, who would want to date him?

Nevertheless, Claudia was the daughter of someone rich and powerful. Hence,

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everyone went along with what she said.

They soon led him up to Claudia's room.

He had been so overjoyed to hear about being given permission to see her that he followed close behind them with his bright and gaudy bouquet.

When Christopher walked into the room, he found Claudia sitting on the bed, looking miserable and pitiful with her head covered in thick loops of gauze bandages.

"Claudia!"

He initially wanted to take a few steps forward in his excitement, but with consideration that she had potentially run away to spend years overseas because he had been too fervent in his pursuit, he decided to instead vibrate on the same spot as he stared at her.

The passion in his eyes made Claudia's stomach churn with disgust. Every inch of him, including the so-called trendy outfit he had curated for himself, was revolting to her.

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She would never have allowed someone like him into her territory if he were of no use to her goal.

“How did you get hurt, Claudia? Are you okay? I—I bought you a bouquet. Do you like it? I was going to bring you some fruits as well, but I wasn’t sure what you liked,” he said.

He was so cautious and tentative in his speech.

She found his voice grating. It was too coarse, too crass, and too insecure.

She still suppressed her dislike to force a smile on her face. “I’m okay. It’s good enough that you’re here. You didn’t have to buy me anything,” she said.

“How can I visit you with empty hands? That would be rude,” he responded.

Disdain was painted all over the faces of the others in the room.

“No one’s asking you to come empty-handed, but you should at the very least bring something nice with you. Look at the flowers you brought! They’re so ugly and gaudy. Did you find them on the side of the road?” someone commented.

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“Yeah! How could you even visit Claudia with that bouquet?” someone else said with a scoff.

The disparaging remarks caused a dark look to flash in his eyes as his hands tightened around the bouquet. Claudia noted every twitch of his body. She pursed her lips and tentatively called out, “Please stop saying that. It’s good enough that he’s willing to visit me. Mr. Drevel, you can just come empty-handed next time. *You*

don't have to buy anything special."

As expected, the dark look vanished the moment she spoke up. He then replied to her in a sweet voice, "Okay."

"Claudia!"

Everyone shot her looks of disagreement.

She ignored them *to* continue to cheerfully chat with him. The longer the conversation went on, the more Christopher admired her. As expected, the woman he chose was *not* like other girls. Claudia did not look down on him at all.

She was so different...

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Everyone merely thought that Claudia was behaving oddly. After all, she was actually talking to Christopher, a thug!

They glanced at each other and decided to turn their attention to him instead.

"Hey, you've seen her now. The bouquet is in her hands. You should go now," one of them called out.

"L..."

"What? We only let you in to visit her. Did you think you could stay here? Look at yourself first. Do you think you're worthy of her?" someone else interrupted.

"Enough. Stop that. He's... Ah!" Claudia suddenly fell to her side and let out a cry of pain in the middle of her sentence.

"Claudia!"

Everyone hurried over in worry.

"Are you okay, Claudia? Is it your head?"

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With closed eyes and a pale face, Claudia shook her head while leaning into Elaine's arms. It took her a moment before she forced a smile on her lips once more.

"I'm fine. You don't have to worry about me," she said.

Her feeble appearance had her friends clenching their fists in anger. "It's all Victoria Selwyn's fault. If she hadn't pushed you, you would not be hurt. You're even going to have a scar now."

Claudia weakly shook her head once more. "It's all in the past. Please forgive her actions."

Christopher narrowed his eyes as he processed what he heard. "What did you just say? Who pushed Claudia?"

She froze. She was about to speak up when someone answered, "Victoria Selwyn. She was one of our schoolmates. You've seen her before, Christopher."

That jogged his memory.

With Claudia still in her arms, Elaine smirked as if a thought suddenly struck her.

"You keep claiming you like Claudia and that you would do anything for her. Now,

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you have a chance to prove that. Victoria is the one who hurt her. Shouldn't you do something about that?"

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The room fell into silence the moment Elaine said that.

No one had expected her to say that.

As for the reason they went quiet, it was because her words suddenly made them realize Christopher was not as useless as they thought.

He was a thug, a gangster who wandered on the edges of society.

He was the best at tasks like teaching others a lesson.

Everyone admired how fast Elaine came to that realization. It seemed like her fight with Victoria had made her thoroughly hate Victoria.

After a very long moment of silence, Claudia abruptly gasped in shock. "What are you saying, Elaine? How could you tell Mr. Drevel to do that? She's just joking.

Please ignore her."

He pursed his lips. "What if I take her words seriously? Claudia, I have never done anything for you before, but I swear, from now on, I will not allow any harm to come

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to you. Anyone who does so will be my mortal enemy. I will never forgive anyone who hurts you."

"Mr. Drevel, the situation was very chaotic back then. It might not have been Victoria," Claudia pleaded.

"Claudia," Elaine said, interrupting with a stern look on her face, "you don't have to defend Victoria. You have defended her for ages, but has she even come to visit you since you got hurt? She doesn't even feel any remorse for her actions."

Claudia looked down. "I just..."

"Enough, Claudia. We know you're kind and can't bear to blame her for anything, but we're not like you. We can't just do nothing when someone's being a bully."

Christopher kept quiet, but the murderous glint lurking in his eyes was an obvious

indicator of his future actions. Claudia could make a good guess at what those would be.

Deep down, she was laughing in glee. She had been worried that the people around her would be suspicious of her when they heard Christopher did something to Victoria after Claudia invited him up to her ward.

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However, things were different now that the suggestion came from Elaine.

She had not expected her plan to go so smoothly. With Elaine as her scapegoat, what did she have to worry about? She tried to stop them. It was not her fault that they ignored her words.

Griselda's test results were out, and they looked good.

As the nurse brought her back to her room to rest, Benedict summoned the Cadogans to his office to inform them of her condition.

"Old Mrs. Cadogan is recovering well, and she seems to be doing well mentally. It looks like she's better suited to life outside a nursing home," he stated.

Mary happily smiled. "Of course. She adores my daughter-in-law. This must be all thanks to Victoria."

Everyone, including Benedict, in the nursing home knew about the fact that Victoria was taking care of Griselda. Hence, he nodded in agreement.

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"That's true," he said.

"When can she go under for the operation, Dr. Sully?" Mary asked.

"If preparations go by quickly, she will be operated on in the next two days.

Otherwise, the operation would happen later this week.”

She nodded. “Very well.”

After leaving the office, she turned to Adrian and said, “Since she’s going to be operated on this week, why don’t I stay? I’ll let you know when the operation date is set.”

While there was a lot of work to do, the elderly family members were more important.

He nodded. “I’ll do my best to hurry back in the next two days.”

“Okay. I’ll book a flight for you now, honey.”

“Thank you, darling.”

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They kept an affectionate exchange of endearments as they continued to walk away.

As for the pair behind them, their interaction left the air cold and tense.

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Alaric and Victoria walked separately. The sight of the couple ahead of them being so loving to each other contrasted with the lack of affection between them made Victoria think that it might look bad if Griselda noticed the contrast.

Eventually, she stopped and turned to Alaric. “I’ll wait for you in the car.”

He paused and turned to look at her. It was only then that he recalled the words he had left unsaid. Just as he was about to finish the conversation from before, Victoria was gone.

A stormy look instantly took over his face as he marched after her.

Meanwhile, Mary had finished booking a flight for Adrian and turned around to speak to Alaric and Victoria to find Alaric running after Victoria who was marching away.

“Those two...” Mary sighed and shook her head. She then shrugged. “Let’s ignore them and take care of Mom first.”

“Okay. I’ll follow your lead,” Adrian said.

He was not worried at all about his son. After all, Alaric was an adult. There was no way he could not even handle his own relationship issues.

Thus, the couple swiftly continued on their way to meet up with Griselda.

Victoria had walked away from Alaric the moment she was done speaking.

She left as fast as she could, worried that Alaric might catch up to her and refuse to let her leave.

She marched out of the hospital doors and straight toward the parking lot.

All she could think about was Griselda’s operation.

If Grandma Griselda has to undergo an operation in the next two days, should she remain at home or move back to the nursing home? Well, she does not like staying

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in the nursing home, so there is no way she would agree with that suggestion. In that case, she should stay at home and only come back on the day of the operation.

This time, they could not leave her alone in the nursing home. They had to accompany her until the very second she was pushed into the operating theater.

Soon, she arrived at the car.

It did not take her long.

Lost in her thoughts, she had actually run to the car.

Staring at the car before her, she suddenly encountered an issue.

She did not ask Alaric for the keys.

Now, she had no choice but to wait outside by the car since she could not head back in.

“Victoria!”

A cold voice rang out with fury from behind her.

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Her body stiffened in shock. Before she could turn around, her hand was grabbed and pinned against the cold metal of the car in front of her.

The air around her was soon filled with Alaric’s icy and overwhelming scent.

She looked up into his dark eyes to find them blazing with rage.

His appearance stunned her. It took her a while before she could respond.

“What are you doing here?” she asked.

Should he not be with Grandma?

“Did you follow me?” she continued.

Alaric was beyond himself with anger at her ability to speak calmly to him at such a moment.

“How else would I know you’re here?” he spat out through gritted teeth.

That rendered her speechless.

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She then tried to struggle out of his grip. As expected, she failed. In the end, she stopped and sighed.

“Is there something you need?”

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Then, as if a thought suddenly struck her, she softly continued, “Even if you need something from me, you could just hold it in for now. Don’t say anything. Can we not wait until Grandma’s operation is over?”

She truly did not want any complications to arise.

Everything had to step aside when it came to Griselda’s health.

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Alaric had actually not known what he wanted to say to Victoria,

He merely chased after her because the stormy emotions stuck in his chest felt overwhelming but had nowhere to go.

However, he knew for a fact that she was the cause of those emotions.

The frustration made him uneasy.

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When he continued to pin her wrist against the car, she scowled. Not wanting to just end the conversation without an answer, she asked one more time, “There’s no difference between saying what’s on your mind now and waiting to tell me after Grandma’s operation, right?”

If he had anything he wanted to say to her, it would undoubtedly be about what happened between him and Claudia.

They seemed to have moved past Claudia’s fall.

He did not bother her about it, likely because the family did not want to humiliate Griselda. However, that did not mean he did not hold a grudge against Victoria for the fall.

Even though he did say he knew Claudia had fallen on her own, he did not step up to clarify the circumstances and defend Victoria.

Thus, if Claudia were going to target Victoria, she would only do it after Griselda's operation.

By then, Alaric and Victoria would be divorced. Victoria would have nothing to worry about then.

Hence, she did not want to fight with him about Claudia right now.

She only wanted to focus *on* Griselda's health.

At that thought, she tried to struggle away once more. To her surprise, he continued to hold on tight to her wrist. The warmth radiating from his grip felt hot against her skin.

She silently stared back at him.

Is he still not letting me go after all I've said?

Finally, Alaric spoke. "Can we sit down and properly talk after Grandma's operation?"

"Of course," she immediately replied.

If possible, she wanted them to part on good terms.

Her swift response seemed like she was only brushing him off, but a careful observation of the look in her eyes did not show any of that intent.

The two of them had known each other since childhood. She would not need to lie to him.

Thus, he slowly let go of her hand.

The force pinning her wrist against the car disappeared.

She heaved a sigh of relief. Did that mean this situation could be put on pause until after Griselda's operation?

As she massaged and rubbed her wrist, she asked, “Did you tell your parents before
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following me?”

“Tell them about what?” His voice might be as cold as usual, but his face looked more pleasant now.

“You ran after me, so we disappeared without a word. Wouldn’t they worry? What if Grandma...”

Alaric’s lips twitched in a self–deprecating manner.

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“Don’t worry about that. Grandma’s greatest wish is for me to get back together with you,” he said, interrupting her.

She could muster no retort to that declaration.

It was true that Griselda hoped for them to be together.

“Mom and Dad will take care of her,” he said.

“Okay.” She nodded.

Silence fell once more, filling the air with awkward tension.

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Moments later, she suggested, “Why don’t we head back in?”

His dark eyes snapped to stare at her.

“Okay.”

He did not say a word on the way back, but she could clearly sense he had slowed down to walk beside her. She pursed her lips as she internally sighed.

It would be so nice if Griselda were not sick.

If that were the case, Griselda would have a healthy body and not have to suffer

through an operation at her age. Victoria would not have to pretend to marry Alaric then.

If not for the fake marriage, their friendship would not have turned into this.

Unfortunately, they were all past the point of no return.

Alaric only messaged Claudia after Griselda's affairs were settled. He did not answer

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her call and only messaged her that Griselda would be operated on soon.

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Claudia had thought he was avoiding her. Thus, even with Christopher avenging her, she was still unhappy since Alaric was not by her side.

His message made her heart leap with joy once more.

She would not be upset if he refused to answer her call only because of Griselda.

She cautiously called him once more.

This time, he answered her call.

"Al," she called out.

There was a note of exhaustion in his voice as he replied, "Rest well in the hospital. I'll visit you when I have the time."

"I know you're busy. It's okay if *you* don't have the time to visit me," she replied in a voice as gentle as a breeze. "My head wound is nothing compared to Grandma's illness. You should focus on that first."

Chapter 115 Make-or-Break Moment

7/10

Alaric had been worried that she would feel neglected due to his absence, so he had

felt relieved when he heard that.

“Okay.”

“Oh, right. Al, is Grandma’s operation happening in the next few days?”

After a moment of silence, he replied, “Within the week.”

Within the week...

She could not resist smirking when she heard that.

“Okay. Tell Grandma that I pray for her operation to go well.”

“Thanks.”

Her smile vanished as soon as she hung up. Her fingers clenched around her phone.

Hopefully, things would go smoothly without a hitch this time.

Chapter 115 Make-or-Break Moment

8/10

Still, if Griselda were undergoing an operation within the week, Christopher’s actions against Victoria during this time would affect Griselda’s health.

That would not do.

No matter what, Griselda’s operation had to be a success.

The longer the wait for the operation, the longer it would take for Alaric to divorce Victoria.

It seemed like they would have to wait before attacking Victoria.

Still, Christopher would be too foolish to wait that long. From the menacing look in his eyes, he would probably make a move in the next two days.

At that thought, she immediately turned to Elaine and asked, “Do you have Christopher’s number?”

Elaine had been peeling an orange for her when she heard that. Her head snapped up in shock.

“Why do you want his number?” she asked.

Chapter 115 Make-or-Break Moment

“Do you have it?” Claudia asked once more.

“No, but why do you want to contact him? Are you...” Elaine was honestly worried that after being neglected by Alaric, she would be depressed enough to throw her lot in with Christopher instead.

It was impossible for Claudia to not hear the implicit question. She scowled.

“What nonsense is that? Just give me his phone number,” she barked out.

Elaine had no choice but to tell Claudia his number to be saved on her phone.

Elaine bit her lips and glanced at Claudia. In the end, she could not resist speaking up once more.

“Why do you want to contact him, Claudia? I’m not trying to mother you, but...”

“It’s fine. It’s nothing important anyway. I’m just worried he might do something to Victoria. That’s why I wanted to talk to him,” Claudia softly explained.

Elaine’s eyes widened in disbelief.

9/10

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Chapter 115 Make-or-Break Moment

10/10

“Claudia, why are you defending her even now? She deserves to be taught a lesson!

She had the nerve to seduce Alaric. Please let Christopher get rid of her.”

Claudia’s face darkened.

“The next few days will be a make-or-break moment. Al will only divorce Victoria after Old Mrs. Cadogan’s operation. What do you think might happen to her if Victoria got into an accident?” she explained.

Chapter 116

“How long have I had to wait because the operation was delayed? If not for that delay, Alaric and Victoria would be divorced by now. All of this would not have happened then,” Claudia stated.

She then grabbed Elaine’s hand. “I know you’re saying this for my sake, but Old Mrs. Cadogan’s operation must be a success. That is the only way for me to even stand a chance to get together with Al. Otherwise... The greatest danger at hand is a divorce that is constantly postponed. I don’t even know if I can warn Christopher off doing anything right now. You’ve always been good with words. Can you help me talk to him? Tell him that he cannot be rash or do anything foolish. I won’t forget what you’ve done for me once I’m Mrs. Cadogan.”

To Elaine, Claudia’s last sentence sounded like a promise.

“Don’t worry, Claudia,” she said. “I’ll help you.”

Claudia shot her a grateful look.

“Thank you, Elaine. You are my very best friend.”

After leaving the hospital, Elaine called Christopher to ask him to meet with her.

Christopher felt no goodwill toward Claudia’s friends due to how they

always humiliated her. Hence, if not for the fact that Elaine knew Claudia, he would have punched her in the face.

Still, just because he would not punch her did not mean he would be nice to her.

“What do you want?” he asked bluntly.

He returned to his usual thuggish attitude whenever Claudia was not around.

His attitude infuriated Elaine so much that she wanted to curse him out. However, she had no choice but to suppress her rage due to Claudia’s request.

“Claudia asked me to pass on a message,” she replied.

“Claudia? What does she want?” His entire stance changed the moment he heard Claudia’s name.

Chapter 116 Do You Even Realize You’re a Mother?

“She said you should not be rash and do anything to Victoria.”

He chuckled. “Even after all these years, she’s still as kind as ever. Her wound will leave her with a scar, right? Thus, I must teach Victoria a lesson.”

“I understand your urge to defend Claudia, but if you attack Victoria so soon after the incident, people will gossip about Claudia. She’s a kind woman who does not deserve to be bad-mouthed.”

He finally understood what she meant now.

“You’re telling me to wait a while?” he asked.

“That’s right,” she confirmed with a smirk. “Wait a few days before

attacking her in a remote place with no one around. Who would link the attack to Claudia by then?"

He took a puff of his cigarette and shuffled to rest his weight on one foot.

"I see."

Deep down, Elaine was disgusted by the way he held himself. However,

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Chapter 116 Do You Even Realize You're a Mother?

Claudia had given her a task, so she suppressed her disgust *and* said,

"While she told you not to do that, as her friend, I want to avenge her as well. If you truly like her, you'll wait for me to tell you when you can act."

He shot her a look.

"What's your motive here?"

His question stunned her. "What?"

"Claudia asked you to tell me not to do anything to Victoria, but now you're telling me to wait for your signal. Do you have something against this Victoria?" he asked.

Her face went pale.

"That's none of your business. If you want to avenge Claudia, you'll work with me. Don't poke your nose where it doesn't belong."

He coldly snorted. "You're quite the schemer. I want revenge, but don't you think you can use me."

"Use you? If I have something against Victoria, it's all because of Claudia.

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Chapter 116 Do You Even Realize You're a Mother?

Can you say you have nothing against Victoria?"

Her explanation actually made sense to him.

Ever since he knew Victoria had injured Claudia, he had thought of Victoria as his enemy.

He remembered her since they had studied in the same place. In his memories, Victoria was an extremely beautiful woman. He had not expected her to do something so hurtful.

As expected, only his Claudia was kind. Every other woman was just a wolf in sheep's clothing.

"Enough. That's all I have to say to you for now. I'll contact you when the time comes. *You* either do as I say or get lost," Elaine declared.

She walked away right after saying that. When she was finally gone from his view, he spat on the ground as a murderous look flashed in his eyes.

"Stupid woman. Once I have Claudia, all of you are doomed."

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Chapter 116 Do You Even Realize You're a Mother?

Perhaps it was because Alaric and Victoria finally had a talk at the hospital, but after returning home, the two of them were surprisingly able to coexist peacefully.

It was the first time that had happened since Claudia's return.

As Griselda was going to be operated on in a few days, Alaric did not go

anywhere but to his office and back. However, the couple continued to act the same as always around each other.

Benedict told them to wait for his notice after that day...

Adrian flew off to deal with work while Mary stayed behind to accompany Griselda on trips around the city.

As she was an easily excitable woman, Griselda had a lot of fun touring the city with her.

Hence, Victoria did not have to worry about Griselda.

Once she was done with work in the morning, she headed down to the dessert shop, hoping to reward herself with some cake.

6/9

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7/9

With a Bluetooth earpiece in her ear, she headed over to the confectionery cabinet to select her cake as Summer lectured her.

"You're done with work, right? Have you had lunch yet?" Summer asked.

"I'm getting some food right now," Victoria replied.

"What? You're only eating now? Victoria, do you even realize that you are now a mother? Even if you're not hungry, the baby is."

"I know. Look, I'm getting food before that happens."

Summer's tone might be harsh, but her words filled Victoria with warmth.

In this huge city, she actually had someone with whom she could confide about everything in her life. Summer was the only person Victoria trusted

to know about the baby and not use the knowledge to hurt Victoria.

Summer scoffed. "You sound proud of yourself. What time is it? You're starving my future godson or goddaughter."

Victoria could not resist smiling as her voice sweetened in her reply.

Chapter 116 Do You Even Realize You're a Mother?

"I know. I know. I'll take a break earlier to get food next time."

"Hmph! You actually think there will be a next time?"

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Victoria laughed before pointing out the pink cake she wanted to the shop employee.

"I would like this."

There was a warm grin on the employee's face when she noticed Victoria was on a call the entire time. She thought Victoria was speaking to her boyfriend. Oh, how she envied Victoria, who was beautiful, sexy, and had a very caring boyfriend.

She even placed Victoria's cake in a pretty gift box.

Summer heard Victoria's exchange with the shop employee and immediately started her interrogation. "Victoria Selwyn, are you eating desserts again?"

"It's only a slice."

"No can do. Did you forget what the doctor said? You cannot eat anything.

8/9

Chapter 116 Do You Even Realize You're a Mother?

sweet for now. What will you do if your cravings cause your blood sugar

levels to increase drastically?”

“That won’t happen, right? I’m only having one slice.”

By then, the cake was packed away. Victoria paid and mouthed thanks to the employee before walking away with her cake.

“I know,” Victoria continued to say to Summer. “You...”

Just as she pulled open the glass door of the shop, someone suddenly gave her a hard shove on the shoulder.

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Chapter 117

Bang!

Victoria’s slender body loudly slammed into the glass door.

The employee’s eyes were wide with shock when she saw that. She hurried over.

“Are you okay, miss?” the employee asked.

Over the phone, Summer had heard the bang as well. “What happened?

What is it? Victoria, are you okay?”

Victoria frowned from the agonizing pain radiating from her shoulder.

When the employee helped her to her feet, her first reaction was to reflexively stroke her stomach to ensure her baby was all right.

When she was finally certain that the only pain in her body came from her shoulder, she heaved a sigh of relief.

She then looked up at the person who slammed into her.

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Chapter 117 Revenge

Who was it? Why were they so careless when entering a store?

Furthermore, so much time had passed since the crash. Why had they not offered an apology?

The face she saw was strangely familiar.

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It took her a few seconds before she could recall the man's name from her subconscious.

"Christopher Drevel?"

"What?" Summer was confused by the name Victoria called out. "Why does that name sound familiar? How are you? Are you okay?"

Even Christopher was shocked to hear his name on Victoria's red lips.

He had not expected a beautiful and pampered young lady to recognize him after all these years. She even remembered his full name.

After all, to the ladies in high society, the existence of ruffians like him was like ants.

Chapter 117 Revenge

"I'll talk to you later. I have to handle this," Victoria said to Summer.

She did not hang up, however. Summer cleverly kept quiet to listen in on what would happen next.

"Why are you here?" Victoria asked Christopher as she held her aching shoulder. She seemed to have forgotten he had crashed hard into her.

This was not what he had expected.

Elaine had told him to hold back for now.

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However, it was impossible for him to sit back one second longer every time he recalled how Victoria had hurt Claudia so badly that Claudia's beautiful face would be scarred. He could not attack Victoria, but that did not mean he could not harass her.

She would not be hurt from being shoved anyway. He only needed to say it was an accident and no one could do anything to him.

He had not anticipated Victoria's response.

It made him panic.

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Chapter 117 Revenge

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It was a long while before he finally replied in a fierce tone, "I'm here to buy some cake."

"Oh." Victoria nodded and smiled at him. "Do you work around here? Are you new to the area? I don't recall seeing you around here before."

He was rendered speechless by that.

After a few more moments of silence, he asked, "Aren't you angry that I crashed into you just now?"

It was only then that she recalled she had been shoved into the glass door. Her shoulder was still aching, and he had not apologized for that yet.

She had not expected the culprit to be someone she knew, however.

At that thought, she replied, "It's fine. It must have been an accident."

A menacing rage flashed in his eyes.

She just deduced it was an accident? Was she naive or stupid?

Still, her response had him at a loss. After all, he was here to teach her a

Chapter 117 Revenge

lesson.

All the schoolmates he bumped into over the years either did not recognize him or looked down on him. No one instantly knew who he was like how Victoria recognized him. She did not even get angry at him for crashing into her.

The thought discomforted him while also filling him with curiosity.

“How did you recognize me?” His lips tilted in scorn. “Rich young women like you detest problematic people like me the most, right? I was a problematic student back in school, and I’m not even a productive member of society now.”

Hearing that, she paused and went silent.

“Was I right? Did you look down on me like those people?” he continued.

She snapped out of her thoughts and turned to look him in the eyes.

“What do you think would make someone a productive member of society?” she asked.

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Chapter 117 Revenge

Her question stunned him.

“Everyone has their own job and place in the world. We’re all humans. Why

should I look down on you?"

In the past, she might not have said anything to him.

However, ever since the Selwyns went bankrupt, she had gained a better understanding of the world.

A few moments later, a thought struck her. "I have to get back to work.

Excuse me."

She soon left the shop without spending a single moment scolding him for crashing into her.

He stood there in thoughtful silence as he watched her leave.

Moments later, he crushed the cigarette in his hands and walked away from the shop as well.

Who was that? Why didn't he apologize for bumping into you?" Summer

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Chapter 117 Revenge

questioned.

"It was Christopher Drevel," Victoria replied.

"Christopher? That name sounds familiar."

She spent a few minutes trying to recall who that person was.

With her cake in hand, Victoria smiled.

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"Don't you remember him? We studied in the same school," she prompted.

The prompt that they had studied in the same school jolted Summer's memory as she exclaimed, "I remember now! I know who he is!"

"Oh?"

“He was one of Claudia’s admirers.”

“That’s right.”

“He bumped into you just now?”

Victoria nodded. She was about to respond when Summer continued,

7/9

Chapter 117 Revenge

“Shoot! Does this mean he wants revenge because he knew Claudia was hurt?”

Victoria froze when she heard that.

“Revenge?” she repeated.

“Yes. He likes Claudia. You know that, right?”

Everyone in school knew that Christopher was Claudia’s simp. That was because he had done a lot of shady stuff for Claudia even though she had always rejected his advances. Still, he was obsessed with his one-sided love.

Due to his identity, everyone only looked down on him even more.

“From the conversation just now, this is your first time seeing him, right?”

Summer asked.

“Yes.”

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“How long have you been working at Cadogan Group? Have you ever seen him around? Why would he appear the moment Claudia gets injured? Do

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you think that’s just a coincidence?”

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Victoria pursed her lips.

“I had nothing to do with her injury,” she said.

“Boo, I know that. I only realized she injured herself because I have faith in you. What about Christopher? He has been her lackey for ages. Would he trust you? Not only would he not believe your word, but he might also attack you for that.”

Standing on the sidewalk, Victoria watched the people and cars going past her as she recalled what happened when she opened the door.

She had not looked out of the door back then, so she could not know if he had crashed into her intentionally or by accident.

However, there was one undeniable fact.

The incident left her shoulder aching with sharp bursts of pain radiating from the spot.

Chapter 118

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Returning to the office, Victoria placed the cake on the table. Her mood was great before she went downstairs, and she even had the appetite to eat, but now, she had lost them all.

Currently, the scene of bumping into Christopher Drevel downstairs occupied her mind.

Summer’s words served as a reminder to her.

As it was possible that running into Christopher was just a coincidence, she didn’t want to assume anything bad about anyone. After all, the

bakery downstairs was well known for its cakes, so it was only natural that it attracted many customers, but could there really be such a coincidence?

Victoria had to bump into a classmate who she hadn't met in years and that person happened to be Claudia's admirer at the same time Claudia was injured.

At that thought, she opened the cake box, allowing the sweet scent of the cake to waft into her nostrils.

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Chapter 110 Are You Not Upset Anymore?

Just as she cut a small slice of the cake and shoved it into her mouth, she made a decision.

Whether or not it was a coincidence, she had to be extra cautious.

If Christopher was here to avenge Claudia, then Victoria would try to avoid any potential threat that he could bring to her. If not, she would simply consider herself a narrow-minded person.

Even though Claudia had promised her that she wouldn't stop her from keeping the child in her belly, there was no guarantee that she wouldn't change her mind.

What if something happened later on?

Victoria dared not imagine the possibilities. All in all, she just had to be extra careful for her unborn child's sake.

Before getting off work, she went to Alaric's office and bumped into Peter,

who was coming out of his office.

As soon as he saw her, Peter walked up to her as if welcoming a close friend. “Miss Selwyn, are you here for Mr. Cadogan?”

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She halted in her steps and met his eyes. “What’s wrong? Is he busy?”

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“**No**, of course not.” Peter shook his head fervently. “He’s getting off work soon. I thought you wouldn’t come and see him, Miss Selwyn.”

Before Claudia showed up, Alaric would always wait for Victoria to come to his office before they left the company together.

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However, ever since Claudia showed up in the company, Victoria no longer came to his office except during working hours, so Peter thought she would never come again.

At the mention of that, Victoria presented an awkward look without uttering a word.

It had been a long time since she took Alaric’s car home. If she hadn’t considered her safety, she probably wouldn’t have come to see him.

“Go on in and look for Mr. Cadogan.”

“Okay.” Victoria *nodded* at him, and when she passed by him, she heard him say, “Good luck, Miss Selwyn. Please take care.”

Chapter 118 Are You Not Upset Anymore?

Victoria was stunned by his statement, but Peter had gone off with the

documents in his hands.

Standing on the spot with furrowed brows, she couldn't fathom his words.

She could assume that Peter wished her luck because Alaric might favor her over Claudia, but why did he tell her to take care of herself?

His statement sounded out of the blue as if he knew something.

She believed that she was very good at concealing her pregnancy, though. Except for the time Summer yelled at her in the office, nobody should know about it because even Yasmin acted normally.

Whatever. He probably doesn't know about it. Victoria shook off her thoughts and continued heading to Alaric's office.

4/9

The door to the office was closed, and just as she was about to knock on it, the door was opened, and out came Alaric with a blank face.

Obviously, he did not expect her to look for him, so a slight hint of emotion appeared on his icy face.

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"Are you here for me?"

Victoria withdrew her hand upon hearing that. Nodding her head, she replied, "Yeah. I don't feel so good, so I don't think I want to drive. Can I- At the sudden thought of something, she paused and continued, "Will you give me a ride home for these few days?"

"What symptoms do you have?"

She never expected him to ask about her condition as he scanned her from top to toe with a sharp gaze.

Victoria froze for a moment. "Erm, that's not the point."

The next moment, Alaric leaned down to hold her shoulders. "Then, what is it? Are *you* sick?"

He had noticed how abnormal she had been behaving as if she was hiding something from him.

Even until today, he was skeptical of that report.

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Initially, he thought that she was diagnosed with a disease, so she tore the report into pieces. However, her explanation to him afterward was flawless.

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She claimed that the report was placed in her pocket when she was out under the heavy rain, so it was completely normal for it to be wet.

After that, she diverted his attention to other issues, and so the situation was forgotten.

"There's nothing wrong with me." While saying that, Victoria furrowed her brows. "Alaric, I told you I'm fine! Why don't you believe me? Do you wish that I'm sick?"

At that, he frowned. "What nonsense are you talking about?"

"If that's not it, then don't assume that I'm sick. The reason I said I don't feel good is because I'm too lazy to drive. Is that okay? Must you get to the bottom of it?"

Her tone gradually sounded impatient, and she even shook his hand away.

Chapter 118 Are You Not Upset Anymore?

Nevertheless, Alaric was not upset at all. Instead, he stared at her with obsidian eyes.

“Are you not upset with me anymore?”

“What?” Victoria blurted.

Alaric pursed his lips and uttered without much emotion. “Nothing.”

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However, a smile was evident in his eyes. Being lazy was an excuse, wasn't it? You just want to reconcile with me, so you came up with that reason.

He took another glance at her and realized that she looked exactly the same as when she was younger.

She had a hot temper, and every time they fought when they were young, she would stomp away and leave him alone. No matter how hard he tried to coax her, she would just ignore him, but when he became impatient, she would approach him like a little cub and make up all sorts of lame excuses in order to reconcile with him.

That was what she was doing currently...

Chapter 118 Are You Not Upset Anymore?

Even though she wasn't sick, she came up with the excuse of being lazy in order to ride home with him.

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“Let’s go.”

Alaric grabbed his car keys and took the lead, the gloomy mood clouding his mind and heart instantly cleared up.

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Victoria, on the other hand, was entirely unaware of his wild imagination.

Seeing him leave, she hurriedly tagged along.

As soon as they arrived at the parking lot, however, Claudia’s call came.

When his phone rang, Alaric took it out, checked the screen, and froze. The subtle change in his expression made Victoria sense something. Without even looking at him, she spoke. “I’ll wait for you over there.”

After saying that, she left sensibly.

Alaric pursed his lips and subconsciously clutched his phone in his hand.

On the other hand, boredom overcame Victoria as she waited.

Chapter 118 Are You Not Upset Anymore?

Compared to her mood last time when she was standing on the side.

while waiting for Alaric to talk to Claudia on the phone, Victoria carried a completely different feeling right now.

Back then, she hadn’t completely given up on him yet, so she felt uneasy and sad when he answered Claudia’s calls.

Now, however, it no longer affected her as much.

It didn’t matter anymore.

Chapter 119

Alaric answered the phone and heard Claudia’s gentle voice sounding from the other end.

“Are you getting off work, Al? I suppose you must be free now, so I decided to call you.”

“Yeah.” Alaric glanced at Victoria and answered, “I just got off work.”

“Great. I was worried that I might disturb you. How’s Grandma? I’ve been quite worried about her, so I couldn’t rest well at all in the hospital. If only she liked me... I could’ve visited her in the hospital instead.”

Every sentence coming out of Claudia’s mouth always included

“Grandma“, and that made Alaric feel bad for her. His voice was lowered as he replied, “You should focus on recovering now. Don’t think too much about everything else.”

“Okay, Al. I’m just worried about Grandma... Can you take me over to see her on her operation day? Perhaps she might not be upset if she sees me.”

On the day of the operation?

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Chapter 119 Poor Child

Alaric pursed his lips and pondered on the situation. Eventually, he came to the conclusion that it might be doable.

However, it still depended on the overall situation on that day.

“I’ll let you know on the operation day.”

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Claudia didn’t expect him to agree readily, but she still decided to offer the suggestion. The fact that he didn’t reject her immediately meant that she had a chance.

“Okay.” She hummed gently before asking tentatively, “Are you free to

come over—now? I'm not trying to disturb you. I just kind of miss you, and my wound... It hurts so bad. The doctor came to tell me that it might take a very long time to heal.”

At the mention of her injury, Alaric knitted his brows.

He did have time, and he also promised her that he would take the time to see her.

However...

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Alaric glanced at Victoria once again and uttered in a baritone voice, “I’ll drop by another day. Take care.”

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Since she was rejected twice in a row now, Claudia pulled a long face.

Despite that, she had no choice but to respect his decision. “Okay.”

Victoria waited for about three minutes and noticed that Alaric was still on the phone, so she fished out her phone and decided to arrange tomorrow’s to-do list.

However, after scrolling through her phone for some time, Alaric was mysteriously behind her all of a sudden.

At the same time, he spoke up abruptly, “Let’s go.”

Victoria was startled because she didn’t expect that he ended the call as soon as she took out her phone.

Hence, she shoved the phone into her bag and inquired, “Are you done?

That’s quick.”

Alaric's expression darkened when he heard that.

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"Was it quick? How long did you expect me to be on the call?"

Victoria twitched her lips awkwardly and changed the subject. "Shall we go now?"

Her tone was slightly raised at the end of the question.

Alaric's expression looked even worse than before.

"Are you going to stay here then?"

Leaving her with that, he went to start the car with a long face.

Victoria stood on the ground, stunned. Wasn't he on a call with his lover?

Why is he so moody after the phone call?

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Anyway, she had no intention of getting into an argument with him. Even if it was just bickering or something simple that might ruin the mood between the two of them, she wouldn't risk doing them.

After all, she needed his protection for now.

if she were to follow Alaric around every day to and from the company,

4/9

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anyone who wanted to seek revenge on **her** might not easily attack if she was with a man.

At that thought, she quickened her pace and tagged along.

Every day after that, besides familiar and safe places, Victoria would follow Alaric to and from the company.

She didn't even touch her own car and made sure that she was never left alone.

Her behavior made Alaric reminisce about the old times. When they were kids, she used to stick to him like gum.

5/9

Back then, he never felt annoyed by her existence. Instead, he found it comforting... and if she was willing, he didn't even seem to mind letting her follow him around for the rest of his life.

Such thoughts hidden in the deepest part of his heart prompted him to analyze his feelings again.

However, every time he had such thoughts, another woman would pop up in his mind. She looked pitiful and fragile, but she desperately risked her

Chapter 119 Poor Child

life to save him, and she was also always considerate of him.

Moreover, he had promised her that his heart would always be open for her.

After realizing that he was in a great dilemma, Alaric felt like the heavens were pulling a joke on him.

Otherwise, how was it possible for one to fall for two persons at the same time?

Having that thought in his mind, he simply tossed the pen on the table and lost the mood to work.

On the fourth day, Benedict sent a message to inform them to bring Griselda to the hospital and that they should be on standby for the

surgery.

Hence, everyone from the Cadogan Family had to put aside any other thoughts or any other tasks at hand to focus on Griselda's surgery.

Once Adrian completed his task, he returned from overseas to take care

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of Griselda at the hospital.

After the registration was done, Griselda was pushed into the VIP ward in a wheelchair.

The ward was well equipped with a water heater, TV, and floor heaters.

Moreover, it was well-cleaned, and they could even faintly smell the disinfectant in the room.

"The room smells of disinfectant," Mary commented as soon as she entered the ward.

When she turned around, she already noticed Victoria had opened the windows for ventilation.

Even though it was just a small and seemingly insignificant act, Mary couldn't help shooting Victoria a thumbs-up.

Her daughter-in-law was indeed a sensible one.

She wasn't just pretty, but she was also capable. Her son must've lucked out to have married her.

7/9

The "lucky" man mentioned was currently taking a call outside the ward,

causing Mary to give him an eye roll.

“Isn’t this ward great, Mom? It’s spacious and bright.”

Griselda scanned her surroundings after entering the ward. Subsequently, she nodded in satisfaction.

“I can’t even be picky when they offer such good facilities in the ward”

Adrian, on the other hand, blurted straightforwardly, “There’s no use in being picky because this is the best room available.”

Mary clicked her tongue and glared at him. “If you don’t have anything nice to say, just keep quiet”

After being reprimanded by Mary, Adrian felt embarrassed and kept quiet.

At the same time, Alaric returned after answering the call.

“Dr. Sully told us that the surgery will be held tomorrow afternoon.”

Upon hearing that, everyone in the room turned toward Griselda in unison.

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She chuckled upon meeting everyone’s gaze.

“Why are you all looking at me like that?”

Victoria couldn’t help but utter, “Take it easy, Grandma. It’s just a minor surgery. It’ll be over before you know it.”

Griselda nodded at that.

“Mmhm. I’ve decided to move on and keep an open mind. Don’t worry about me.”

58%

Initially, she wanted to say that even if she died during the surgery, she would have to accept her fate, but at the thought of how Victoria bawled

the other day when she said that, Griselda decided against it.

Then, she looked at Victoria, who was sighing nervously while looking at her.

Oh, poor child.

Chapter 120

“Is she going for the surgery in two days?”

9

1/9

Claudia clutched the phone in her hand, but she couldn't hide the joy and excitement in her tone.

Finally, Griselda was going for surgery!

Old Mrs. Cadogan wouldn't pull another trick, would she?

“That's great. I'm sure Grandma's surgery will go well.”

“Thanks.”

While in a cheerful mood, she asked, “Al, remember what I told you that day? Can I come over on Grandma's surgery day? Don't worry. I'll just stay outside the ward and leave after a while. I don't need you to fetch me either. I'll just come over and take a peek. Can I?”

However, the silence was all that greeted her.

After some time, he uttered in a deep voice, “I don't want any accidents,

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Claudia.”

Upon hearing that, she froze.

“What do you mean?”

“Grandma needs time to recover after the surgery.”

Upon hearing that, she understood what he meant.

Unreconciled, she bit her lower lip and argued, “But I wasn’t planning to expose myself. I’ll just be there as your friend. Since she’s undergoing surgery, I’m just coming over to visit out of concern. Can’t I even do that? Perhaps, she might be happy to see me!”

“This is not a minor surgery, Claudia.”

Calming herself down, Claudia took some time to recollect herself.

“Sorry, Al. You’re right. I was full of myself earlier. Sorry... I was too eager to visit Grandma because I’m worried about her. I wasn’t thoughtful enough.”

“Just focus on your recovery.” That was all Alaric could say to her.

7/9

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Without a choice, Claudia hung up.

Then, she bit her lower lip and told Elaine to come in.

“I have good news.”

She had to speak to Alaric on the phone earlier, so she told Elaine to leave the ward.

In all honesty, Elaine wasn’t happy with that. She had offered so much help to Claudia, so what was the problem with her listening to their conversation?

Anyway, that wasn’t important. She dared not speak out, hence she could only quietly wait outside the ward.

“What is it?”

“Al’s Grandma will be getting the surgery in these two days, so I suppose it’s tomorrow.” Claudia clutched the hem of her shirt in excitement. “Once Griselda’s surgery is over, Al will divorce Victoria. I shouldn’t have to worry by that time, right?”

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“Of course.” Elaine smirked. “You’re his life savior, remember? He’ll be forever grateful to you.”

Hearing the word “grateful“, Claudia was slightly dissatisfied.

After all, she didn’t just want his gratitude.

At that thought, she lowered her eyes and muttered, “But if he is only grateful toward me...”

“No way!” Elaine quickly rebutted. “Judging from how he treats you, I doubt that he’s only grateful to you. Don’t worry. He’s just temporarily blinded by Victoria, and that is a common mistake that all guys make. Once she leaves him, he will focus his attention all on you.”

4/9

“Yeah. Thanks, Elaine.” Claudia raised her head and shot her friend a sweet smile. “Right. These two days will be critical. You must help me keep an eye on Christopher and prevent him from doing anything impulsive.

Otherwise, our plan will go down the drain.”

Elaine would have almost forgotten about it if Claudia hadn’t brought it up.

Once she left the ward, she gave Christopher a call.

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“Be on standby to attack within these two days.”

Once Griselda finished her surgery, what was the use of keeping Victoria? The reason Alaric was still spoiling her was most likely to put on a show in front of Griselda.

Christopher then questioned, “Didn’t you say that it would be too soon for us to attack Victoria? Wouldn’t it make people misunderstand Claudia?”

“Didn’t I say that a few days ago? How many days have passed?”

“Is a few days a big difference?”

“Are you doing it or not? If you’re taking the job, I’ll send you the details tomorrow.”

Christopher went silent when Elaine spoke in such an aggressive way.

Elaine waited for some time but didn’t get his reply, so she narrowed her eyes. “Are you pulling out now, Christopher? Turns out you’re just all talk. I knew that men like you are never sincere! All you do is talk big! I thought you were different.”

5/9

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Christopher was instantly worked up due to her words. In a tone filled with dismay, he rebutted, “Who the hell told you I’m pulling out? Do you really think I can’t beat women?”

Elaine was taken aback by his sudden outburst of emotion, so it took her a while to recollect herself.

“I—I thought you didn’t want to help Claudia anymore, so-”

“I will help her, but not you, so you better be polite when you’re speaking to

me, or don't blame me for teaching you a lesson too. Got it?"

After hanging up the phone, only one thought was present in her mind-gangster.

Christopher was a gangster. The fact that Claudia made friends with him would eventually lead her to her demise.

Despite that... he was a good candidate to be taken advantage of.

After all, if he really did something out of impulse due to his hot temper, they could easily push the blame on him, and no one would even question that.

6/9

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His character and background were enough to give off the impression that he wasn't a kind being.

7/9

The next day, Victoria nearly went without sleep for the whole night. Hence, she decided to get up early and take a ride with Alaric.

While they were having breakfast at the dining table, he noticed that she looked paler than yesterday.

Not only that, she didn't even seem to have any appetite for breakfast.

Every time she picked up her fork and brought the food to her lips, she would put it down again after seemingly thinking about something.

Just like that, she repeated the same set of actions many times.

Eventually, Alaric couldn't hold back from asking, "Do you want to pass out because of low blood sugar when Grandma is in the hospital?"

Upon hearing that, Victoria finally shook herself out of her thoughts and noticed that she hadn't eaten even a bite of the food while Alaric's plate was already empty.

"Don't be nervous. Dr. Sully is a skilled doctor. There shouldn't be a

12 **23** Fri, 23

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problem," Alaric comforted her.

"Okay." Victoria forced a smile. "I know."

E-

Regardless of that acknowledgment, her body and heart just couldn't agree with his statement.

Eventually, she only managed to eat a mouthful under Alaric's supervision.

Before they left, Hector made her a banana oat smoothie and even added some honey to it.

Victoria couldn't help but praise him, "Mr. Bowen is really considerate."

Alaric had his hands on the steering wheel while he remarked, "That's because you're like a child who needs to be taken care of."

That statement took Victoria slightly aback. Once she divorced him, he wouldn't care for her like that anymore, would he?

While in a trance, she suddenly felt a cold gaze landing on her.

That feeling was like a snake tangled around her neck which sent a chill down her spine.

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Subconsciously, she looked in a certain direction.

The car had just arrived at the entrance of the hospital, and the direction she was looking at was exactly where a dense forest could be seen.