

## Departure with a Belly Chapter 121

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Chapter 121

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After the car left the premises of the Cadogan Group, Victoria felt the eerie feeling disappear.

But even so, the feeling from earlier still made Victoria extremely uncomfortable.

After the car drove out, she couldn't help but turn her head to look back at the dense forest.

Was there someone there, or was she just being too sensitive lately?

Recently, she had been hitching rides with Alaric to and from work; she was always by his side wherever he went, but nothing strange had happened.

But that moment just now was really bizarre.

"What's wrong?"

Alaric's voice came from the side, bringing Victoria back to her senses.

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She jerked her head back and shook it.

“Nothing.”

Victoria pursed her red lips, thinking that maybe she was just anxious because Griselda was going to have surgery soon, which might be causing her to be paranoid.

Alaric glanced at her and saw that her complexion wasn't as good as when she left the house, so he looked in the direction that Victoria had been staring at through the rearview mirror.

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She had been looking in that direction the whole time. Nevertheless, Alaric took a few glances but didn't see anything special.

In the end, Alaric thought that she was behaving as such because she was worried about Griselda.

Perhaps, it was because of the past events that left a shadow on her.

Alaric's eyes darkened, and he gradually slowed down the car.

After the car had gone far away, a figure walked out from the dense

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forest.

Christopher threw his cigarette on the ground and stomped on it with his foot, then took out his phone and called Elaine.

“You need to think of a way to get Alaric away from her.”

Elaine was still with Claudia. As Griselda was going to have surgery that afternoon, Elaine planned to send a message to Christopher after Griselda was taken into the operating room and then have him take action.

She just didn’t expect that Christopher would contact her first.

So, she frowned and said, “What do you mean?”

“How can I make a move without getting the man next to her away?”

There was a deep murderous intent in Christopher’s eyes. He suspected that Victoria was wary of him since he bumped into her that day. Because of that, *she* had not only not gone downstairs during the day but also never gone out alone these past few days.

In fact, Christopher didn’t plan to make a move on her these past few

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days; he just wanted to familiarize himself with her movements and the times when she would be alone, but he didn’t expect that she would be with Alaric all this time.

If he was supposed to make a move today and there was no occasion

when she was alone, then he couldn't do anything either.

After Elaine heard his words, she understood what Christopher meant.

I got it. I'll figure something out."

After hanging up the phone, Elaine went into the hospital room.

Claudia had been holding her phone since she woke up as if her phone was some precious treasure.

"What's wrong? Who was looking for you?" Claudia asked, looking up.

Elaine thought carefully and didn't tell her it was Christopher who had contacted him, but instead asked, "Old Mrs. Cadogan is having surgery; don't you want to go see her?"

When Claudia was asked about visiting Griselda in the hospital, her eyes

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dimmed a bit.

"I do want to... But..."

She thought of what Alaric had said to her that day. Instantly, she felt depressed.

"If Mr. Cadogan doesn't let you go, you can go on your **own**," Elaine encouraged her. "You're injured now, and if you just sneak out to the hospital to take a peek, I think Mr. Cadogan won't refuse, right?"

After Elaine said that, Claudia was a bit tempted.

The most crucial thing was that Claudia had eavesdropped behind the door when Elaine went out to make a phone call earlier.

If Christopher was going to make a move today and had to get Alaric out of the way, then he would indeed need her help.

But she couldn't agree too quickly, lest Elaine catch on.

Thinking of this, Claudia only showed a slightly tempted expression but didn't answer quickly.

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Seeing her expression, Elaine continued persuading, "Claudia, surgery is a big deal. You want to run out because you care too much. Besides, Alaric is going to divorce Victoria and be with you anyway. If Old Mrs. Cadogan finds out that you were sick but still went out to see her, she will definitely be touched."

Claudia hesitated. "What you're saying seems to make sense."

"Right?"

"Well... I'll think about it."

"Okay. Griselda's surgery is in the afternoon, so take your time."

By the afternoon, Claudia told Elaine, "I thought about it and I think you're right. I'll do as you say."

With this, a shy smile appeared on Claudia's lips. "I plan to go later, but the hospital staff probably won't let me out. Can you help me then?"

"Of course."

Elaine smirked triumphantly; this was the result she wanted, and Claudia's

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willingness to cooperate was great.

With that, she went out to call Christopher and told him she had it under control; he just had to wait for the right moment.

After coordinating with Christopher, all they had to do was wait.

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Before the surgery, Griselda went through various preparations. Currently, she was lying quietly in bed with Victoria and Mary by her side.

"You two don't have to stare at me all the time. Go rest on the side. Aren't you tired?"

Mary laughed. "We're just accompanying you. Why would we be tired?"

Victoria nodded in agreement.

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Just before entering the operating room, Victoria became tense. She held Griselda's hand, unconsciously tightening her grip.

Griselda felt the force on her hand and looked at her. Victoria immediately forced a smile, but even so, Griselda could feel the stiffness in her smile.

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"Grandma, don't be afraid... We'll be waiting for you outside, so just sleep well and everything will be *okay* when you wake up."

When Griselda heard her, she noticed that Victoria's voice was trembling slightly.

"You silly girl..." Griselda's heart was warm. She reached out to hold Victoria's hand back. "I'm not afraid, so don't worry. You and Alaric will be waiting outside for me anyway."

"Yeah. Grandma, you must come out safely. I'll be waiting for you."

"Okay."

As Griselda was about to enter the operating room, Victoria still tightly held Griselda's hand, as if in a daze.

She didn't move until Alaric came forward to hold her delicate wrist and encircle her waist with one hand.

"Grandma is going into surgery now. Don't worry. She will be fine."

His voice was deep as he spoke right next to Victoria's ear.

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After he finished speaking, he pulled Victoria's hand back. Victoria let go of Griselda's wrist, but her gaze still remained fixed on Griselda's face.

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"Grandma..." she murmured.

"Don't worry, Victoria. I'll be fine," Griselda reassured her.

Finally, Griselda was pushed into the operating room.

If it weren't for Alaric holding her back, Victoria would have rushed up to talk to Griselda again. In the end, Victoria realized she could wait until after the surgery to talk to her.

After thinking it over, Victoria sat back down and nervously twisted her fingers, waiting anxiously for Griselda.

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The operating room lights soon lit up, and family members were left waiting outside.

Alaric pulled Victoria to sit on a chair by the side.

Although Victoria sat down, for some reason, she had a very ominous feeling. She furrowed her brows uncomfortably.

She had felt that something wasn't quite right all morning, but she had been so focused on Griselda that she hadn't paid attention to anything



else.

Moreover, the person sitting beside her, Alaric, had been holding her wrist ever since they entered the room. His grip was strong, and the warmth from his hand constantly reassured her.

If it weren't for Alaric, she would have been even more anxious.

While she was lost in thought, Alaric's phone, which he had put on silent, began to vibrate.

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Since Griselda had entered the operating room, Alaric had put his phone on silent mode, and everyone at the company knew that Griselda was having surgery and not to disturb him.

The only person who would call him at this time was...

Victoria unconsciously looked at Alaric.

Alaric pursed his thin lips and looked back at her for a moment before taking out his phone.

Sure enough, Claudia's name appeared on the screen.

When Victoria saw Claudia's name, for some reason, she bit her lip.

At this point, he couldn't possibly still answer Claudia's call, right?

Just as she was lost in thought, Mary, who was sitting opposite her, suddenly spoke up.

"You still haven't turned off your phone at this time?"

Mary's words echoed Victoria's thoughts. At that moment, she also turned

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## Chapter 122 When Did I Blame You?

to look at Alaric.

She wasn't sure if it was Mary's words that made him realize it or if Alaric himself knew that it was inappropriate to answer Claudia's call at this time, but he hung up the phone.

Mary looked away, no longer paying attention to him.

Victoria felt relieved in her heart.

At the same time, she wanted to pull her hand back, but Alaric not only did not let go but tightened his grip.

She frowned and looked at him.

"I'm holding on," Alaric said coldly. "So, you won't be afraid."

Victoria was speechless.

Who said she was afraid?

Nevertheless, with his hand holding hers, she did feel a little safer.

However, she had promised Claudia not to have any intimate actions with

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## Chapter 122 When Did I Blame You?

him. Holding hands counted as intimate actions, right?

"Griselda has always been a fortunate person," Alaric said again.

After hearing Alaric's words, Victoria snapped back to reality, realizing that even if it was an intimate gesture, she couldn't afford to think of anything else at this moment.

She nodded. "I know."

"Are you cold?" Alaric suddenly asked.

Victoria shook her head.

The next moment, Alaric let go of her hand.

At that moment, Victoria felt as if a weight had been lifted from her heart.

But this feeling didn't last long because Alaric took off his jacket and draped it over her.

The warm and refreshing scent of the jacket enveloped Victoria's body, and she was momentarily taken aback.

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She had just said that she wasn't cold, so why did he...

Just then, Alaric sat down beside her again and took her wrist in his hand. once more.

Victoria was speechless.

She didn't say anything in front of Adrian and Mary.

Then, everyone waited in silence outside the operating room.

But unfortunately, it didn't last long. About ten minutes later, Alaric's phone vibrated again in his pocket, and Victoria could feel it clearly since she was wearing his jacket.

She looked at Alaric subconsciously and their eyes met.

"Your phone is ringing again. Are you going to answer it?" she asked.

Alaric pursed his lips and then said, "It's in your hands now."

What does he mean?

Does he want me to take the initiative and answer the phone?

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Chapter 122 When Did I Blame You?

At first, Victoria could pretend to ignore it and let Alaric answer it himself. But after the phone kept vibrating in his jacket pocket, she became annoyed.

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“Would you blame me if I turn off your phone and you subsequently miss anything important?” she asked Alaric.

Alaric’s gaze fixed on her face. “Have I ever blamed you before?”

His words caught Victoria off guard.

“Okay, it’s you against your words. I’ll turn off your phone then. It’s been annoying me,” she said, taking his phone out of his pocket. It was quiet now, but Victoria could see from the screen that Claudia had called him four or five times.

Why now? Why was she calling him now?

Did she want to ask Alaric about Grandma’s surgery?

As Victoria was thinking about this, Alaric’s phone vibrated again.

But this time, it wasn’t a call. It was a message, and Victoria could see it

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clearly.

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“Mr. Cadogan, this is Elaine. I’ve been calling you, but you haven’t answered. I don’t know if something has delayed you from answering my calls, but I have something urgent to tell you. Claudia has run away. I don’t know where she went, and she’s injured. She left her phone in the ward,

and I can't find her anywhere. I'm very worried. If you see this message, please help me find Claudia."

Although the message was long, Victoria read it quickly.

Claudia is missing?

At this crucial moment?

How could she disappear?

Victoria's brows furrowed, and she looked at Alaric.

Meanwhile, Alaric was still looking in the direction of the operating room and didn't notice her.

If...

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If she pretended not to have seen this message, turned off the phone, and Alaric asked her about it later, she could say she didn't see it and he wouldn't be able to blame her. Moreover, even if she saw it, he couldn't do anything to her. After all, it was he himself who had said that the phone was in her own hands and it was up to her to decide.

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Besides, even if Claudia was injured, she was an adult and had her own plans. She could take care of herself, right?

Even if something happened, it was her own fault.

Victoria held the phone in her hand, building herself up mentally.

After some time, Alaric turned his head toward her and saw that she was still holding the phone. He asked, "Did you turn it off?"

Upon hearing this, Victoria gradually came back to her senses. She looked at him slowly and then bit her **lip** before saying, "There's a message that I think you should see no matter what."

After speaking, Victoria handed the phone to Alaric.

Despite all the mental preparation she had tried to make, it seemed like

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she couldn't ignore the message after all. Claudia had injuries on her face; what if she did something irrational?

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Moreover, Victoria had feelings for Alaric, and Claudia saved him. Deep down, Victoria was grateful to Claudia as well.

If it weren't for Claudia, she probably would never see Alaric again.

"You should go and check it out," she said softly.

Chapter 123

When Victoria handed over the phone, Alaric also saw the content.

Victoria clearly saw his pupils contract; it was probably because he was worried about Claudia running away,

She turned her face away, wanting to take off her jacket to give it back to him. But at this moment, she heard Alaric say, "I'll go out for a while."

Although she had guessed this, hearing him say it himself felt different.

Victoria said softly, "Okay." She then stood up to take off her jacket to give it back to him.

Alaric's gaze changed as he held her hand. "No need. Just wear it. I'll be back in an hour."

"But it's cold outside," Victoria protested.

"I am a man." Alaric's voice was firm. "You wear it. I'll be back soon."

Then, he looked at the light outside the operating room.

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"There's still an hour to go for the surgery. I'll come back before that. Call me if you need anything."

Victoria pursed her lips and spoke softly, "Okay. Let your parents know."

"Mm." Alaric nodded.

Then, he let go of her hand and went to find Adrian and Mary..

When Mary heard that he was going out, she immediately glared at him in displeasure. "What are you thinking? Do you know what's going on right now? Do you even care about your grandmother?"

Alaric pursed his lips, staying silent under the reprimand.

Seeing him lowering his head and remaining silent, Mary poked his chest.

"What are you going to do?"

He didn't speak, but his expression clearly indicated that he was going out.

Seeing this, Mary sneered. "Did Victoria agree to let you go?"

Alaric finally looked up and nodded.

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Chapter 123 Accident

**Mary** couldn't believe it. "What? She actually agreed?"

Then, she looked at Victoria and made a sarcastic remark. "She's so generous. She actually agreed to let her husband go out and look for some other woman at this critical moment."

Victoria felt her ears turn red at Mary's sarcasm, which was the first time she had ever experienced it.

Alaric frowned slightly. "I have something important to do."

"What could be more important than your grandmother?"

"Claudia is missing and I need to find her."

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Hearing Claudia's name, Mary hesitated for a moment. She really didn't like her son's attitude toward Claudia, but unfortunately, Claudia had done them a great favor.

When it came to a benefactor, she couldn't bring herself to say anything unkind.

She asked, "Why did Claudia go missing? What happened to her?"

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"She suffered severe injuries to her face and will be scarred. She's not in a **good** state of mind lately," Alaric said, looking at the time.

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When Mary heard that Claudia had suffered serious injuries to her face, as someone who cared about her appearance, she was at a loss for words. If



she was also injured on her face, she would probably go crazy.

“I’ll leave first,” Alaric said, seeing that Mary and Adrian weren’t saying anything else.

Looking at his back, Mary could only say, “Come back soon, and if necessary, let your assistant find someone to help you search for her.”

In response to her, Alaric merely disappeared from view.

When he left, Mary said helplessly, “Why does it have to be Claudia? We can’t say anything about her. If we do, we’ll seem ungrateful.”

She sat down and sighed.

Adrian reached out and stroked her head indulgently. “Don’t think too much. Fate has its own plan.”

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Mary glared at him petulantly. “What are you saying?”

Adrian just smiled and said nothing.

Mary thought of something and said to Adrian, “You stay here. I’ll go over to Victoria.”

“Okay.”

Victoria sat there wearing Alaric’s jacket while looking at Mary walking toward her with a helpless expression.

Sure enough, after Mary sat down next to her, Mary asked, “Doesn’t it hurt to watch him go find another woman? Aren’t you heartbroken?”

Victoria could only faintly reply, “He’s just going to find her and not do anything else.”

“Are you sure it’s just like that?”

Victoria remained silent.

“You are husband and wife; sometimes you don’t need to be so

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understanding. If you feel jealous, feel jealous. If you’re always too accommodating, he might think you don’t really love him.”

Yes, Victoria understood this principle.

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But... their marriage was fake from the beginning, so did she have the right to feel jealous.

Seeing that Victoria didn’t say anything, Mary suddenly felt a bit frustrated.

“Alright, forget it. As long as you two don’t have any problems. As an elder, I won’t say much.”

After speaking, Mary got up and returned to Adrian’s side.

Victoria looked up and saw that after Mary left, Adrian carefully helped her sit down and adjusted her collar, full of affection throughout the process.

Love for someone truly could not be hidden.

Sometimes, she envied Adrian and Mary’s love for each other.

In this world, couples who loved each other and could stay together for a

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long time without diminishing love were really rare.

When she was young and secretly liked Alaric, she also thought of them as being like Adrian and Mary.

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But because of her father's failed relationship, Victoria felt that love was not so beautiful anymore.

However, when she saw Adrian and Mary, she felt that she could do it too.

Still, fantasies were just fantasies, and reality was far from it.

She was her father's daughter, so her fate would probably end up like her father's. She would not be getting a happy ending in love, right?

Thinking of this, Victoria could only sigh in her heart.

After a moment, she suddenly felt nauseous, probably because she hadn't eaten much in the morning, and she even felt that the air here was stuffy. She wanted to go outside and take a breather.

Victoria stood up and said to Adrian and Mary, "Dad, Mom, I'm going to the restroom."

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Upon hearing this, Mary immediately looked at her.

"Going to the restroom? Do you want me to accompany you?"

Victoria shook her head. "I can go by myself."

"Alright, be careful."

As Victoria looked a little weak, Mary was a bit worried about her.

"Okay."

Victoria smiled at her and then walked outside. When she got to the door, she suddenly remembered that she still hadn't taken off Alaric's jacket.

Nevertheless, she was too lazy to go back, so she just draped the jacket over herself.

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The air in the hallway was chilly, and Victoria subconsciously tightened the jacket around her.

To be honest, the weather had been getting colder recently.

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She looked out the window and guessed that it would snow in Gandra soon.

As she was thinking, footsteps approached from behind.

Many people came and went to hospitals, so Victoria didn't think much of

1. it.

But when she heard the footsteps getting closer and the same creepy feeling from this morning returned, she sensed that something was wrong and wanted to turn around.

A pair of hands suddenly wrapped around her from behind, covering her mouth and nose.

Then, a strange smell came over her.

Soon, darkness washed over her and she lost consciousness.

Chapter 124

When Victoria woke up, she was in an abandoned warehouse.

Her head felt heavy; her body was limp and weak. Victoria surveyed her surroundings and realized she was in an abandoned warehouse filled with

the damp, putrid smell of decay.

Her hands and feet were tied separately, and the warehouse was cluttered with discarded cardboard boxes.

She already had an idea of the culprit behind this.

Victoria pursed her lips and took a deep breath. She didn't feel any pain in her stomach, so she breathed a sigh of relief.

She was worried that they had injured her, but except for where the ropes had been tied tightly on her, she didn't feel any pain.

Suddenly, she heard a noise outside the warehouse. The heavy iron door was pushed open, and the room was filled with light.

Christopher walked in carrying a bag and closed the door behind him,

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plunging the warehouse back into darkness.

Bang!

He walked over to Victoria, dropped the bag next to her, and crouched in front of her.

Victoria stared at him calmly.

After a moment, Christopher said, "I can remove the tape from your mouth, but if you dare scream, it will make me angry, and I will knock you out immediately."

Victoria hesitated for a moment, then nodded in agreement.

Christopher peeled the tape off her mouth, and Victoria instantly felt her breathing become smoother. Still, the smell in the warehouse was so bad

that she didn't take deep breaths.

Her reaction surprised Christopher. "Aren't you afraid?" he asked.

Victoria looked at him and asked calmly, "If I said I am, would you let me go?"

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"No."

Well, then.

Victoria leaned against the cardboard boxes behind her and remained silent.

Her hair was disheveled, and her face, pale from the cold, looked clean but haggard. Her hair covered most of her face, making her look even more sallow.

Christopher watched her in silence.

She was undeniably beautiful, but she had a poisonous heart.

"What should I do with you?" Christopher finally asked. "You hurt Claudia, and I have to get revenge on you. However, you're the only child from the wealthy families I've met who recognized me at first sight and knew my name."

Ever since he started school, Christopher had been looked down upon because of his identity. People never even looked at him directly.

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## Chapter 124 The Unpredictability of Human Nature

Unexpectedly, Victoria called him by his name and recognized him.

immediately.

He felt like he had finally become someone with a real identity.

But she was the one who hurt Claudia.

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So, Christopher had been struggling with what to do with her.

Victoria surprised him by asking calmly, “Did Claudia tell you I hurt her?”

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Christopher narrowed his eyes and shook his head. “Of course not. How could Claudia just come out and say something like that?”

“Then it was her companion who told you?”

“You’re very smart. It was her companion. So what? You don’t think that just because Claudia didn’t say it directly, you’re not responsible for harming her, *do* you?”

Victoria looked at Christopher and suddenly asked, “You like Claudia, don’t you?”

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His feelings for Claudia were well-known in school, so Christopher didn’t deny it.

“So what if I do? If I don’t like her, why would I kidnap you for her?”

“Does that mean you’re willing to sacrifice yourself for her and seek revenge on me?”

“What did you say?”

When Victoria spoke, she didn't look at him but gazed out the window. Her voice was faint as she continued, “I remember the last time you told me that you believe that we think you have no value to society.”

When Christopher heard this, his eyes contracted.

“Do you remember what I asked you then? I asked, ‘What do you think is helpful to society?’ Is this your answer?”

Christopher stood still in shock.

Seeing him like this, Victoria sneered. “Or maybe you've created value for yourself? After hearing from Claudia's friend that I harmed Claudia, did

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you investigate the truth at all?\*

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“Investigate?” Christopher had never thought of such a thing, let alone that Victoria would point out a new direction for him.

Victoria looked at him with amusement.

“So, you never thought of investigating and just came to kidnap me, right?”

Then let me ask you, what about after the kidnapping? Do you think the police won't find you?”

Hearing this, Christopher coldly said, “Are you talking about the surveillance? Do you think I didn't prepare in advance?”

“No, I'm not talking about surveillance.” Victoria shook her head.

Ever since Victoria had dealings with Claudia, who returned to the country,



she had gained some insights.

Moreover, with the phone call Alaric received in front of the operating room today, Victoria suddenly realized that this was actually a game set up by Claudia.

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Negotiations, promises... All of that was nonexistent.

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Claudia was wary of the child in her belly. As long as she was pregnant, she couldn't stay calm even for a day. Despite that, she didn't want to be labeled as an evil person.

Since she couldn't get her hands dirty, someone else needed to do it.

Last time it was Elaine at the farewell party; this time it was Christopher in front of Victoria.

Even Alaric was included in her schemes.

The entire disappearance and leaving only a phone at the hospital were all part of her carefully orchestrated plan, weren't they?

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"If it's not surveillance, then what is it?" Christopher asked curiously. He couldn't figure it out. He felt like the woman in front of him was speaking in riddles with him.

Victoria snapped out of her thoughts and said in a soft voice, "I'm talking about the unpredictability of human nature."

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Christopher was speechless.

It took him a while to figure out what she meant.

“Are you saying that someone will expose me?” he asked.

“I didn’t say that,” Victoria replied with a flat expression. “But wrongdoings. always require someone to bear the unfortunate consequences.”

Her words made Christopher understand.

Victoria looked up and met Christopher’s gaze.

“Everyone is born equal, and I have never looked down on you.”

Christopher pursed his lips. If these words had come from anyone else, he would have found them laughable. Yet, these words came from Victoria.

After so many years, she still remembered his name.

Christopher still sneered, “Do you think saying these things will make me let you go?”

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“Whether you let me go or not is up to you to decide. I just want to ask you, have you really decided to sacrifice yourself for Claudia? Even if you don’t mind ending up going to prison in her place, does it not matter to you if you become a person who not only has no value to society but also has the potential to cause harm?”

Chapter 125

Griselda underwent surgery, and there was no assurance that Adrian and Mary would notice her absence in time. Even if they did, they probably wouldn’t be able to intervene.

Meanwhile, Claudia had taken Alaric away, and their current whereabouts

were unknown. So, Victoria could only try to save herself. She had been deeply affected by Christopher's mocking remark from their previous meeting, and she could tell from what he said today that he cared a great deal about what others thought of him. Hence, she realized that this might be a way to manipulate him and find an opportunity to escape for herself. After she spoke, he fell into silence, obviously deep in thought.

Before coming here, he had been hot-headed and only wanted to defend his lover. However, when she made it clear what the consequences of his actions would be, he hesitated. Despite his denial, he had to concede that she was right. Moreover, someone needed to take the blame; he was the most obvious candidate.

When Victoria saw Christopher suddenly become aware of the situation and absorbed in thought, she realized she was on the right track to save

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herself. He appears to be even more concerned with his reputation than I

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had anticipated. Everyone has their weaknesses. At that thought, she felt a sense of contentment. "You don't want to do this, do you?" Her voice was soft and almost magical. "You're young and have a bright future ahead of you. You shouldn't give up everything for love."

After hearing that, he seemed to snap out of his indecision and suddenly glared at her. "That's a pretty way of saying you want me to let you go."

His hostile gaze startled her, but she quickly regained her composure. “Yes, I want you to let me go, but my request is for my sake. What about yours?” “What about my request?” Christopher’s gaze was ice–cold as he glared at Victoria and suddenly changed his tone. “You hurt Claudia. How can you ask me to let you go?”

“Have you investigated this?” she inquired instead of answering him.

When he heard that, he pursed his lips and remained silent.

“So, you haven’t verified anything and have simply believed that I’m guilty based on one person’s account,” she said bitterly, a sad smile forming on

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her fair face. “In that case, what’s the point of arguing with you?” She then lowered her gaze and looked like she had no intention of speaking any further.

After seeing Victoria’s reaction, Christopher narrowed his eyes in suspicion. “A–Are you truly innocent of hurting Claudia?” He actually wanted to believe her. After all, anybody who remembers my name is probably not that bad.

“Of course,” she replied with utmost seriousness. “I would never do something like that.”

As he was contemplating her words, someone pounded loudly on the warehouse door.

“Christopher, don’t believe this woman. She’s lying to you,” a familiar voice from outside said.

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Victoria immediately recognized Elaine’s voice, who had become enemies

with her. Then, Victoria's eyebrows knitted together.

When he heard Elaine's knocking, his expression changed, and after glancing uncertainty at Victoria, he turned to open the warehouse door.

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As soon as the door opened, Elaine rushed in.

When she saw Victoria in a sorry state, lying amidst piles of cardboard boxes, she smiled with satisfaction. "Victoria, you've had your comeuppance."

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"What are you doing here?" Christopher asked Elaine, looking displeased.

He probably didn't expect her to show up.

Elaine glared at him in response and uttered, "If I hadn't shown up, you probably would have let the perpetrator who injured Claudia get away scot-free, right?"

Exposed by her, he couldn't hide his embarrassment. Then, he gritted his teeth and said, "What does this have to do with you?"

"Why wouldn't it? I'm Claudia's good friend. If you can seek justice for her, why can't I?" she retorted.

After hearing that, Christopher couldn't help but sneer, "If you want to seek justice for her, don't use me. Get out."

Get out? That's impossible." As Elaine spoke, she kicked Victoria with her

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foot.

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Victoria's face changed instantly when she saw the incoming kick, and she quickly curled up her body.

Bam! Elaine's flying foot hit Victoria's leg directly.

At that moment, Victoria felt a wave of pain wash over her, and tears welled up in her eyes.

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"What are you doing?" Christopher's face changed drastically, and he rushed forward to pull Elaine away before she kicked Victoria again. "Are you crazy?" Although she had lost her mind, her strength was not comparable to an adult man's, and he quickly drew her away.

"You're the crazy one. You have already caught her, and you are still here pretending? What, are you infatuated with this woman because she's pretty?" she taunted him while crossing her arms in front of her chest. "You always said that you would retaliate a hundred times against anyone who hurt Claudia. Now the person is right in front of you. What are you going to do?"

Christopher was speechless by her remarks. Then, he looked at Victoria,

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curled up among the cardboard boxes, and frowned. She appears in bad shape after Elaine gave her a brutal kick earlier

On the other hand, Elaine had been watching by the side, and when she saw him looking at Victoria for a long time without doing anything, she

sneered and said, "What's the matter? Haven't made up your mind yet, or are you pitying her?"

He didn't say anything and just stared at Victoria quietly, seemingly making a decision.

However, Victoria noticed he wasn't completely hopeless, so she endured the pain and said, "Christopher, she just wants to use you to get back at

1. me. If you leave now, she won't dare to hurt me."

How could he not understand what Victoria meant? She implied that if he left and something happened to her, Elaine would be responsible. That was why Elaine wouldn't dare to do anything.

"Don't talk nonsense. You should be thankful that Christopher is here, or else you wouldn't even have the chance to speak," Elaine retorted.

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"Is that so?" Victoria leaned against *the* cardboard box, panting lightly with beads of sweat on her pale forehead. "Then, tell Christopher to leave and stay here yourself. If anything happens to me, let's see if you can escape."

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"You!" Elaine was struck by her words. She felt embarrassed and angry, but then she quickly came up with an idea. She sneered and said, "Right, I can't run away, and I don't plan on running away. So, we still have a lot of time left. Victoria, how about we play a game?"

Victoria looked at her expressionlessly.

After saying that, Elaine walked toward her but was stopped by Christopher halfway. "What are you doing?"

"Tsk." Elaine squinted and stared at Victoria. "You're pretty good, aren't you? Not only *did* you make Alaric fall for you, but you also seduced Christopher. Are you trying to steal everything that belongs to Claudia from her?"

ΓΕΙ

## Chapter 126

Victoria frowned in response to Elaine's comment. What did she mean. when she said I want to steal everything from Claudia? Claudia and Alaric have never been in a committed relationship; if they had, I wouldn't still have feelings for Alaric and be willing to stage a wedding for him. It is simply because he and Claudia never established a relationship. At that thought, Victoria sneered, "Is Alaric the one who told you that he belongs to Claudia?"

"Don't be so stubborn, Victoria. I'll let you know whether or not Alaric is Claudia's," Elaine said as she pushed Christopher's hand away and hunkered down in front of Victoria. "Do you have your phone on you?" she asked as she got closer.

Victoria looked at her warily in response.

"Why are you looking at me like that? I'm only conducting an experiment."

Then, Elaine flipped Victoria over to search her pockets.

At that moment, Victoria was worried for her unborn child when she noticed Elaine rifling through her body, so she struggled in fear because



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she did not know what Elaine intended to do.

"Don't move!" Elaine warned her in a low voice. "If you keep moving, I can't guarantee you won't get hurt."

"What do you want?" Victoria asked, her face turning pale.

"I just need your phone for a fun experiment. Are you worried about that little b\*stard in your belly?" Elaine's voice was low, so Christopher couldn't hear her, and she even said proudly, "I heard Claudia say that you wanted to protect that little b\*stard. Why? Can you use him to keep your title as Mrs. Cadogan forever?"

Victoria's eyes narrowed as she heard the word "b\*stard," and she couldn't help but headbutt Elaine, who was right in front of her.

"Ah!" Elaine was knocked backward and yelped in agony.

"Don't talk about him like that!" Victoria gritted her teeth and glared at Elaine with a fierce look. A moment ago, Victoria had a gentle expression; now, she appeared angry and ready to fight.

The sudden change was frightening even for Elaine. After being

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headbutted, her ear was still ringing as she stood up. She was furious and wanted retaliation, but when she met Victoria's eyes, Elaine was paralyzed with shock.

It wasn't until Christopher ran over and grabbed *her* arm that she returned to her senses. "What do you want to do?" he asked, pulling her up.

On the other hand, Elaine didn't dare provoke Victoria anymore after the last incident. What if, despite being tied down, she tried to fight back, and I got hurt? At that thought, she turned to him and asked, "Where's her phone? She can't have gone out without it."

After hearing that, he glared at her and released her arm. "It's none of your business."

"Yes, and I need to use her phone to make a quick call," she said.

Christopher frowned, feeling that Elaine would mess things up.

"Hurry up and give it to me. Otherwise, I'll call Claudia and tell her."

He was about to refuse when she threatened him with Claudia's name.

Ultimately, he gave in and handed over the phone. She immediately took  
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it and started to fiddle with it.

"What are you going to do?"

"Just sit back and watch."

Christopher glanced at Elaine in disgust, and then his gaze fell on Victoria, whose forehead was swollen from the headbutt. The contrast with her terrifyingly pale lips was startling. I'm curious about what Elaine may have said to her because Victoria was very composed when I brought her here.

"I found it." Elaine browsed Victoria's phone contact list and effortlessly

found Alaric's number. Due to the earlier attack, she didn't dare approach Victoria directly, so she crouched far away. "Do you think Alaric will answer if I call him with your phone now?"

Victoria looked at Elaine coldly with an indifferent gaze as if she didn't want to bother Elaine at all.

Seeing her like this, Elaine couldn't help but angrily say, "At this point, do you still think you're some pure and noble fairy? You clearly want to be Mrs. Cadogan, but you're still pretending. Just wait and meet your end!"

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"Whether or not I choose to become Mrs. Cadogan is none of your business!" Victoria snorted. "Or do you want to be Mrs. Cadogan too?"

Hearing this, Elaine's face turned red, and her words stuck in her throat.

"W-What are you talking about?"

"I'm just saying casually. Are you so worked up because I hit the nail on the head?" Victoria sneered.

Elaine's whole face twisted in anger, and her features resembled worms crawling across her face. "Victoria, you'll regret this!" With that, she dialed Alaric's number on Victoria's phone. Then, she curled her lips and said, "You probably already know who he's with now, but if his wife calls him **for** help, will he come?" After saying that, she paused and pretended to be surprised, covering her mouth with her hand. "Oh my, I forgot to mention that he might not even answer the phone, let alone hear your plea for help, right?"

Beep. Beep... The call was connected.

Meanwhile, Christopher, standing next to Elaine, realized what she had in mind and frowned. "Do you want others to come here? Are you crazy?"

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"Shut up! What are you talking about?" Then, she said impatiently, "Alaric won't answer Victoria's call right now; he's with Claudia."

When he heard that, his eyes dimmed a bit. Here I am, desperately giving up everything for the woman I like while she is with another man. At that moment, he recalled what Victoria had said and admitted that it made sense. Claudia will never like me, so everything I do now is self-sacrifice? At that thought, he suddenly regretted his actions.

Beep. Beep... On the other hand, Elaine's call from Victoria's phone went unanswered until a robotic female voice answered. "Hello, the number you dialed is currently unavailable. Please try again later."

"Hahaha!" After hearing the cold, mechanical female voice, Elaine couldn't help but laugh hysterically. "Victoria, I told you he wouldn't answer your call, right? Look, he's with Claudia now, so you're not important to him. Victoria, you're not even worthy of being compared to Claudia." After speaking for a while without getting any response, she looked up to see Victoria's reaction. However, what Elaine saw almost drove her crazy. Victoria was staring at her with a blank expression; she didn't seem disappointed or upset that Alaric hadn't responded to her call.

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## Chapter 126 He Won't Pick Up

Initially, I want to retaliate against her, but if this can't even elicit a smidgeon of anger from her, what is the point of what I've done so far? "I don't believe you can be indifferent to everything!" Enraged by Victoria's lack of response, Elaine threw away the phone and rushed toward her. "Elaine, what are you doing?" As soon as Christopher finished speaking, there was a loud bang, and the warehouse door was kicked open.

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After hearing the sound, the three people in the warehouse all turned their heads toward the door simultaneously. Before they could react, a group of people rushed in.

Shortly after, someone grabbed Elaine and pushed her down to the ground, and Christopher also received the same treatment.

Suddenly, the already dusty warehouse was exacerbated by the large crowd of people who rushed in. Due to that, Victoria instinctively closed her eyes.

"Capture them and take them out!"

"Ah! What are you doing? Let go of me!" With her eyes closed, Victoria heard Elaine struggling and screaming as they were taken away.

Did I get rescued? The group of people doesn't look like police officers. Then, who saved me? As she pondered, Victoria felt lightheaded and nauseated. Is it due to the earlier headbutt with Elaine or the drug from before? I lost consciousness not long after Christopher's hand covered my mouth, and I'm unsure if this will affect my health. As she thought about it,

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she heard a steady sound of footsteps approaching her. She tried to lift her head to see who it was, but in the next second, she lost consciousness again. At that time, she was leaning against a pile of cardboard boxes, so even though she passed out, she didn't fall, but her head drooped down.

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A few seconds later, a large hand held her head before a pair of arms gently carried her up. She was carried by the man, her soft hair brushing against his chest. The man's gaze softened instantly, but his eyes and voice became cold again when he looked at his men. "Let's go." As he spoke, he carried Victoria out.

As soon as they left the warehouse, the man saw Elaine and Christopher being led away.

While Christopher seemed defeated and remorseful, she was extremely unwilling and muttering curses. "What are you people doing? Let go of me! You can't forcefully take people away like this; it's illegal."

"Illegal?" The leader sneered and continued, "So, now you know that forcefully taking people away like this is illegal?"

After hearing that, she choked momentarily, then immediately pushed the

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blame onto Christopher. "He did it all; it has nothing to do with me."

Suddenly, Christopher stopped walking upon hearing her words. He wasn't taken aback by her attempt to shift all the blame onto him.

"Did you hear that? He's responsible for everything, and I have no involvement whatsoever in this matter," Elaine repeated.

"Is that so?" The leader raised an eyebrow. "If it has nothing to do with you, why were you there? When we entered, you even rushed toward Miss Selwyn. Don't tell me you were trying to save her?"

When she heard that, she stammered, "I—I was trying to save her. I suspected that Christopher was trying to harm her, so—"

After hearing this, the leader couldn't help but roll his eyes. He obviously didn't want to listen to her ridiculous ramblings, so he waved his hand and shoved her into the vehicle. When the surrounding noise subsided, he commented, "Dang, where did this idiot come from? If I hear more words from her, I'm afraid my IQ will drop."

As he turned his head, he was met with a pair of cold eyes, which caused

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him to shrink back and quickly open another car door for the person. "Mr. Morison, please."

"Okay," Bane replied coolly and elegantly, bending slightly as he lifted the woman into the car.

The guy who opened the door for him was Gus Sarders, who stood behind and watched his boss gently place the woman in the car in the most unprecedented manner.

On the other hand, the driver in front obviously noticed it too, and his voice unconsciously lowered when he asked, "Mr. Morison, where are we going next?"

After hearing that, Bane gave him a glance that seemed to say, "Do you really need to ask me where to go?"

The driver who caught Bane's eye swallowed nervously. Then, he heard Bane say, "To the nearest hospital."

"Okay." After saying that, the driver started the car and headed off in the direction given. Since he knew Victoria was inside the vehicle, he dared not drive too fast.

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pulled the needle out of her IV, causing her to gasp in pain.

Her sudden movement drew Bane's attention, who had been lounging quietly on the couch, and he quickly rushed over to help *her* and called for a nurse.

While the nurse was handling her IV, Victoria asked, "Can you remove this first? I have something urgent to attend to."

"I..." The nurse hesitated as she glanced at Bane, who stood beside her.

He chuckled lightly and replied, "You can't have it removed. You are not feeling well, and there are still two bags of fluid drips to administer."

"Bane, I'm grateful you saved me, but I must be off to attend to a pressing matter."

"If you are referring to Old Mrs. Cadogan's surgery, you have nothing to



worry about.”

Victoria froze up as soon as she heard the crucial words. “You know? How did her surgery go?”

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“Don’t worry.” He placed his hand on her head, and his smile was gentle.

“The surgery was very successful, and she is resting well now.”

After learning that the operation had gone well, she finally calmed down.

Grandma wouldn’t have to worry about her illness, and she wouldn’t have to spend as much time in a nursing home. While contemplating this, a hint of warmth crept into her eyes and expression. Then, she looked up and said, “I want to see her now. This IV-”

“Victoria.” Bane’s large hand moved from the back of her head to her shoulder, and his voice was soft. “Right now, the most important thing is to take care of yourself, understand?”

Although he didn’t say anything important, Victoria felt that there was some hidden meaning in his words from his tone and expression. Soon, her mind started to spin rapidly.

I awoke in a hospital, and without knowing my condition, the doctors would not have given me an IV. If I have an IV line attached to me, then...

Her face turned pale as she considered the possibility and slowly looked up at him.

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### Chapter 128

On the other hand, Bane's gold-rimmed glasses obscured his deep-set eyes, making it difficult for Victoria to read his expression, while he kept a smile on his face the entire time.

After a moment of eye contact, he raised his eyebrows. "What's wrong?"

At his words, she lowered her eyes and remained silent. She also did not mention visiting Griselda again. Then, she quietly let the nurse reinsert the needle, at which point the pain gradually spread from her hand and heightened her alertness.

After the nurse left, it was just the two of them in the ward, and Victoria figured now would be a good time to break the silence. As she fumbled for words, Bane abruptly kneeled before her, holding a clean handkerchief and gently wiping away the bloodstains from her wound that had seeped out from being aggravated earlier.

Although the nurse had already cleaned it up, the blood had stained her sleeve and could not be wiped away. However, he appeared to be driven by an obsession with cleanliness as he laboriously wiped away the blood stains repeatedly.

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After nearly ten seconds, she couldn't take it anymore and said, "It's okay, just leave it. You can't wipe it off."

When he heard that, his movements paused, and he didn't continue wiping. After a moment, he said, "Someone will bring you new clothes later, so change out of this one."

Victoria didn't respond and couldn't quite understand what Bane was trying to do. He probably knows I'm pregnant but hasn't mentioned it since the nurse left. Since he and Alaric are friends, I doubt Alaric would keep it a secret from him...

Lost in thought, she finally heard him speak. "Your hesitant look tells me you have something to say to me."

In response, she bit her lower lip and looked at him awkwardly.

When he saw the look on her face, he raised his hand and lightly tapped her forehead. "We've been friends for many years, and you still hesitate to speak to me? Do you regard me as an outsider?"

She mused. I don't mean to make you feel like an outsider, but it's difficult for me to bring up this matter.

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When Bane noticed Victoria remained silent, he lightly laughed and broached the subject. "Alright, then let me ask you, what do you plan to do?"

His word choice suggests that he already knows about it... Even though the chances of him not knowing after he brought me to the hospital are slim, I still hold out hope. Before he asked me that, I had a glimmer of hope, but

now it's gone. At that thought, her face turned ashen, and she said, "So, you already know." Then, she lowered her head and added, "Are you going to tell him?"

For a long time, she did not get a response from him. After a while, she felt his big hand ruffle her hair. This action made Victoria's beautiful eyebrows twist slightly. Why does he still treat me like a child?

Soon, she heard Bane ask lightly, "You don't want him to know?"

However, she was taken aback by his question. As Alaric's friend, Bane's normal response to hearing me say this should be a surprise that Alaric is still unaware of it. Instead, his reaction is to ask if I don't want Alaric to know about this matter. As she pondered this, she saw him stuffing the handkerchief he had just used to wipe her bloodstain back into his suit

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pocket.

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Suddenly, another scene played out in front of her eyes. When they left the restaurant the last time, he accidentally bumped into someone, so he wiped his hands thoroughly with a handkerchief and then threw it away.

Now, he...

For a moment, Victoria forgot what she wanted to say, feeling her mind in chaos.

"Don't worry, I will help you."

After hearing this, she felt that her mind became even more chaotic.

Looking up at Bane, she asked, "Help me?"

He smiled slightly in response. "I will also help this loving couple, Alaric and Claudia."

The words "loving couple" made Victoria heartache, and she eventually nodded numbly. Although her mind was still in chaos, hearing that he would keep her secret, she finally felt relieved.

"What's going on between you two?"

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After confirming that they shared a common objective, Bane finally asked her another question. "You've been with him day and night, yet he doesn't know about your pregnancy?"

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When she heard that, her hands clasped involuntarily, and she replied, "He knows."

When he heard this, his eyes behind the glasses slightly darkened. As his gaze flickered, his tone changed a bit as well. "He knows?"

"Yeah." Victoria nodded. She instinctively touched the stray hairs around her ears as she thought about the message she had sent out that had fallen on deaf ears. Smiling faintly, she added, "He doesn't want this child."

At this point, Bane understood everything. So, Alaric knows she's pregnant, but he doesn't want the child. On the other hand, she wants to keep the child but *does not* want Alaric to know. That explains why she seemed so

wary

the last time she went to the restaurant. “So, he now believes you have already aborted the child?”

“Probably.”

When he saw her ashen features and fake smile, his thin lips tightened

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into a straight line, and his eyes grew distant. Then, he sighed after a moment. “Why are you so foolish? You still plan to raise the child yourself?”

“Can't I?” Victoria looked up, meeting his gaze. “Although I'm alone, I'm sure I can raise the child well. After all, I grew up in a single-parent family, and I'm normal and healthy. My father gave me love which was not any less than others. I don't feel I'm any different from others just because I don't have a mother. I-” Her speech became more rapid, and her voice diminished as she spoke, manifesting a loss of confidence.

Bane held her wrist, and he said gently, “Okay, it's merely raising a child. There's no need to explain so much. Just do what you want to do.”

Due to the earlier emotional upheaval, her breathing became more labored, and it took her a while to calm down. Afterward, she composed herself and said, “Sorry, I was feeling a bit emotional just now.” She lowered her eyes and spoke softly.

Bane looked at Victoria in front of him, feeling a bit helpless. At first glance, she appears to be no different from any other average person. She is not only sound in both body and mind but also possesses an impressive level

of resiliency. Despite growing up without a mother, she is still extremely

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sensitive to the mention of single-parent families. "It's okay." He still smiled.

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gently. "By the way, I took Alaric's call before you woke up. He's probably on his way here now, so be prepared."

Bang! As soon as the words fell, the door to the ward was pushed open forcefully. Immediately, a familiar figure appeared at the hospital's ward door.

Before she could react, the person rushed to her and grabbed her shoulders, panting heavily as he asked, "Are you hurt? Are you okay?"

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At this moment, Alaric's hair was disheveled, he had a worried expression, and the chill of the outside air lingered on his body. Although it seemed like he rushed over for her, Victoria knew he had probably been looking for Claudia before coming to her. Besides, he was too busy to answer her call, or maybe it was inconvenient for him. Ultimately, she didn't want to speculate too much on the matter.

So, when he came to find her, she didn't feel any emotional response.

However, they still had to maintain their relationship looking good on the

outside, so she calmly shook her head and said, "Don't worry, I'm fine." She realized she was neither frightened nor dissatisfied when he did not answer her phone calls

In the meantime, he didn't have the time to worry about these things.

Then, he bent down and carried her.

At that moment, Victoria suddenly felt weightless and instinctively wanted to wrap around his neck. When she moved, her hand pulled on the IV needle, causing pain that immediately brought her back to the present and halted her motion.

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Before she could say anything, Bane spoke up. "Alaric, what are you doing?"

Alaric's face turned cold as he replied, "Taking her for a check-up."

"The check-up has already been done," Bane calmly replied.

"Let's do a more comprehensive one," Alaric insisted.

Bane smiled in response. "Didn't you see the needle in her hand?"

After hearing this, Alaric paused and realized she was still receiving treatment. He was too hasty earlier and didn't notice this detail. Realizing this, he also admitted that he may have caused her pain by carrying her earlier, so he quickly put her back down and asked softly, "Are you hurt?"

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Victoria heard his gentle voice and felt a deep sense of irony. You weren't even there to pick up the phone when I called. So, what's the point of these



questions now? Thank goodness I've already made it clear to myself that we're not a couple, and he doesn't have to act like one. Hence, she smiled lightly and uttered, "I'm fine."

Alaric frowned slightly as he observed her expression and wanted to

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speak but refrained due to the presence of others in the room. Eventually, he said, "Rest for now. After the IV infusion, I'll take you for a comprehensive check-up."

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On the other hand, Victoria knew she couldn't go for the check-up. If she did, her secret would surely be exposed. Still, if she refused, then...

At this moment, Bane interjected in time. "Al, do you not trust me? The necessary checks have already been done, and there are no problems."

When Alaric heard that, he glared at him with an emotional look. However, Bane seemed not to notice, and his smile remained gentle.

After a moment, Alaric thought of something, and his aura turned colder.

Then, he suggested icily, "Let's leave her to rest in the room, and we'll go out to speak?"

Bane nodded in response. "Sure."

Following that, the two men exited the ward. Before Bane walked out, Victoria exchanged glances with him. When Alaric caught sight of it, his hostility intensified.

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After closing the door, they walked to the opposite side of the ward and ensured that she would not overhear their conversation.

“What happened?” Alaric’s sharp gaze fell on Bane’s face with a deep sense of inquiry.

After hearing that, Bane removed his glasses and wiped them gently before smiling and explaining, “I heard that Old Mrs. Cadogan was having surgery, so I went to the hospital to check on her. When I got there, I saw a familiar figure being taken away, but I couldn’t confirm who it was without seeing their face. Later, I went to the operating room and found out it was Victoria, so I had her rescued.”

Alaric also wanted to know the sequence of events, so he listened quietly.

After Bane finished speaking, he frowned. “What about the perpetrators?”

“We caught them,” Bane replied.

“Who is it?” Alaric couldn’t figure out who would do that. Victoria doesn’t have any enemies. So, who would target her at this time?

Hearing his question, Bane fell silent.

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## Chapter 129 Self Awareness

Suddenly, Alaric’s brow furrowed in response to the silence. “Bane?”

Then, Bane lifted his gaze and spoke thoughtfully. “Do you truly want to know?”

This question made Alaric even more confused. Even though Victoria appears to be fine now, the kidnapping is a serious matter to which I could

turn a blind eye.

Putting his glasses back on, Bane said sternly, “The person who kidnapped her might surprise you. You need to be prepared to make a choice.”

Hearing the word “choice,” Alaric had a foreboding feeling in his heart.

Sure enough, before he could ask further, Bane uttered, “It’s someone from Claudia’s side.”

When Alaric heard this, his gaze turned cold.

“My subordinates have already sent over their names. Take a look for yourself.” Bane handed his phone to him.

Alaric took the phone and looked at the photo. He immediately recognized

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Christopher, who had argued with Victoria at the farewell party *and* was not allowed to appear in front of Claudia again. As for the other guy, he wore a tough-guy look, and Alaric didn’t recognize him at all. “Does he have any connection with Claudia?” He pointed at Christopher’s photo.

“According to the information, he and Claudia were classmates in the same school before and were Claudia’s pursuer. She’s your lover, yet you don’t even know her pursuer?”

The word “lover” made Alaric frown in displeasure. After that, he looked at Bane, who seemed to have a good temper. I’d known him for a long time, but his lips were always set in a shallow smile. He wasn’t like this before, but now it makes me feel... Thinking of this, he narrowed his eyes and

asked a question he had wanted to ask since earlier. "Why didn't you contact me when you realized Victoria was taken away?" As he spoke, he fixed his gaze on Bane but found that he still looked calm and gentle.

"Sorry, Al. I didn't have time."

This answer made Alaric frown deeply. His voice suddenly turned cold, and he looked at Bane sarcastically, asking, "Is it because you didn't have time or didn't want to tell me?"

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Bane still smiled, but his words were different now. "Since you already know, why bother asking me so clearly?"

As soon as Alaric heard that, his breathing hitched for a moment. "Do you like her?"

Bane grinned and said nothing in response, confirming his suspicion.

"She's my wife now." Alaric gritted his teeth.

"It doesn't matter; you will divorce," Bane replied.

Alaric's face changed, and asked, "Did she tell you?"

Bane didn't confirm or deny that she did it, but he said lightly, "Alaric, as a friend, I must remind you that you must have some self-awareness. Why did you marry Victoria? Why are you still entangled with Claudia? Don't you know what's in your heart?"

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## Chapter 130 I Won't Go Easy

### Chapter 130

After hearing Bane's response, Alaric's mind was in chaos. He had always felt that something was off about Bane when they were young. Bane was always close to Victoria, and he often patted her head and called her "little girl." Still, Bane had always said she was just a kid who hadn't grown up yet. So, he always thought Bane treated her like a younger sister.

Although this was his opinion, deep down, Alaric always felt that something was off. This feeling continued until they lost contact and disappeared from each other's lives after he went abroad. However, he never expected that today... Bane actually admitted it, and so quickly at that.

"Surprised?" Bane chuckled softly. "Isn't it obvious that I have liked her since we were kids? I thought you knew all along."

After hearing that, Alaric said nothing, with his lips pressed into a straight line.

"Looks like you just found out. Well, it's not too late to know now." Thinking about something, Bane added, "So, what will you do about Claudia?"

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“What?” Alaric’s mind was still on the fact that his friend liked Victoria. As a result, he had no desire to think about anything else.

Then, Bane put it delicately. “I heard you left the hospital halfway because someone sent you a message saying Claudia was missing?”

Alaric was astute, so he naturally comprehended what Bane was saying.

Although Alaric also felt that the two incidents were too coincidental to the point of being suspicious, he couldn’t believe that Claudia was involved, given that she had risked her life to save him by jumping into the river.

On the other hand, Bane could tell Alaric’s response by his silence. “It seems our opinions are different now. In that case, as a friend, I have to warn you in advance. I can’t stand it when anyone bullies Victoria. Hence, if I find out that Claudia is involved in this matter, I won’t go easy on her.”

Alaric frowned upon hearing that. “What do you mean? Have you already assumed that it’s her?”

“I’m just waiting for the results. Don’t you want to know? Considering your feelings for Claudia, you should at least think about what you will do if it turns out she’s involved, right?”

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Meanwhile, Alaric did not go to find Claudia after leaving the hospital but instead returned to Central Hospital.

Griselda had already undergone her operation, but she remained in the observation room.

When Alaric arrived, he asked, "Grandma, is she-"

Slap! A slap landed on his handsome face. He didn't dodge, and he was hit squarely in the face.

Mary's palm's hurt because she had to use all her strength to slap her son, and her normally fair palms quickly turned red. She usually maintained such poise and beauty, but she lost her cool at that moment. Then, she glared at him with bloodshot eyes. "I'm so disappointed in you!"

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After Adrian saw that, he quickly stepped forward to pull his wife away.

"Why did you have to do that? Does your hand hurt?" he spoke to her while massaging her hand in a distressed manner.

Soon, Alaric's handsome face was quickly marked with a handprint. After

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all, the slap had used almost all of his mother's strength. After that, he appeared gloomy and disheartened. In his entire life, from childhood until

now, his mother had never laid a hand on him until this one time. Despite his desire to explain himself, he was speechless at realizing he had let everyone down. He had left while his grandmother was in the hospital undergoing surgery, and he had not returned until now, which made him appear to be a complete jerk. After a while, he said, "I'll see Grandma first." After saying that, he walked away while Mary glared at her son's back, with Adrian trying to calm her down. "Okay, don't be angry. Anyway, things have already happened."

"What do you mean? Just because things have happened, I shouldn't care anymore? It's because I've been too lenient that he's acting so recklessly now!" She was so angry that she lost the air of a refined and wealthy lady.

"I'm not saying you shouldn't care, but since things are like this now, getting angry won't help. Let's take it slowly," he explained.

"Take it slowly? With things like this, we can't take it slowly. Why don't you take care of your son yourself? I'm done with it."

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Adrian sighed helplessly upon hearing that. "You know I always listen to you. As for our son, what would you do if you were in his shoes? If you



heard that your lifesaving benefactor was missing, could you sit still in the operating room?"

When Mary heard that, she didn't say anything.

"It's a dilemma. What do you expect him to choose?"

"I didn't say he couldn't go find her, but did he have to take so long? Even Victoria... Fortunately, Bane found her. Otherwise, she would be in danger, and what's the point of his dilemma?" she argued.

"Yeah, fortunately, Bane was there. Don't blame Alaric anymore. He's also feeling bad about it," Adrian said.

"Feeling bad? He can feel bad all he wants but will regret it when something happens. He doesn't know what's most important to him," Mary replied angrily.

However, when she thought of her son silently walking away after being slapped by her just now, she felt sorry for him. He is probably feeling bad

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too. Still, what could he do? Either choice is painful for him. Even as parents, we could not speak ill of Claudia lest we be deemed ungrateful to a benefactor. As decent individuals, we should be thankful. It's not easy to

strike a balance between everything, and poor Victoria is the one who has to suffer. The more she considered this, the more she felt for Victoria; she knew she couldn't stand in Victoria's shoes after what had happened today. Despite that, she wondered how Victoria remained so composed under such duress.

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Alaric, on the other hand, stood up after approximately an hour of accompanying his grandmother outside the observation room.

"I'm going out for a while." Despite being slapped by Mary earlier, he still informed the two of them before leaving.

His mother immediately furrowed her brows upon hearing that. "At this time, you still want to go out?"

"Yes, there's something I need to take care of," he said in a baritone.

Looking at her son's serious expression, Mary initially didn't want him to go, but after thinking about it, she changed her mind. "Okay, then go take care

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of it. Take care of it quickly, and as for Victoria-

"Don't worry, I will take care of everything," Alaric replied. Then he left.

Since Claudia returned to the hospital ward, she noticed that Elaine was

not there. She waited for a long time, but Elaine did not come back. My phone is quiet, with no calls or incoming messages. As if Elaine and Christopher have suddenly vanished into thin air.

Soon, she began to feel anxious because she knew Christopher had acted at this time. She had already made great efforts to create time and opportunity for them, but Alaric was extremely astute and would eventually suspect her. Hence, she had only the fact that she had saved his life, despite her own wounds, to fall back on as her ace in the hole. In addition, she knew that everything would be fine as long as Victoria's unborn child was gone. Therefore, she could only hope that Christopher had completed the task, or else all her efforts would be in vain.

While Claudia was lost in thought, the ward door was abruptly opened.

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"Who is it?" She looked at the door, thinking Elaine had returned with good news. However, to her surprise, she saw Alaric dressed in a dark suit with an icy expression and his entire being radiating hostility.