

Departure with a Belly Chapter 306

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Chapter 306

I worked so hard at raising the kids for so many years, and he is going to snatch them away from me just like that?

Victoria couldn't help but clench her fists at her sides before she walked over slowly.

Alaric, who was still basking in the joy of watching the children eat, hadn't noticed that someone was approaching.

That was until...

"Mommy?"

Nicole was nibbling on a drumstick when she suddenly saw the figure standing behind Alaric. When she raised her head and saw Victoria, she exclaimed in both surprise and delight.

Meanwhile, Alaric stayed seated when he heard Victoria's name. The smile on his lips instantly vanished.

Even Nathan, who had been quietly eating, stopped munching and looked behind Alaric, his gaze clearly evasive.

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Wait a minute... Alaric pursed his lips slightly.

Just as he was about to get up, he heard Victoria address him, "Mr. Night?"

Upon hearing this, Alaric stopped for a moment before he slowly narrowed his eyes.

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After a second, he lightly tapped his molars with his tongue and took his time to stand up, meeting Victoria's gaze.

"Mommy, what are you doing here?" Nicole immediately put down the spoon in her hand and wiped her mouth clean with a tissue before she went to hug Victoria's leg.

Victoria was still in her high heels, so she stumbled a little when Nicole hugged her.

However, she regained her balance fairly quickly.

"Miss Selwyn."

Victoria had just stood up straight again when she saw Alaric politely extending his hand toward her.

Looking at those large hands, she quietly scoffed and calmly shook hands with him.

"Hello."

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She barely touched him before she let go, leaving Alaric no chance to shake her hand.

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Nathan was watching from the side when he noticed this.

Mommy doesn't seem like she likes Mr. Night a lot, he thought with a frown. But why?

After greeting him, Victoria pretended not to recognize him and looked at the table.

"Nicole, Nate, what did I tell you before? You can't eat food from strangers."

Hearing the word “strangers” made Alaric frown.

Apart from being the children’s father, he was also the “Silent Night” who had been supporting their live stream.

And yet, she actually referred to him as a stranger in front of Nicole and Nathan.

The children didn’t say anything after hearing those words.

Victoria smiled and continued, “I’m sorry, Mr. Silent Night. I heard from Nicole and Nathan that you always bring food for your nephew. These mischievous little ones. always come to bum meals off of you, don’t they? How much do the meals they had these few days cost? Shall I pay you?”

Her politeness and the distance between them were quite apparent. She clearly wanted mun,

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nothing to do with him.

Instead of answering her, Alaric only pressed his lips into a straight line and kept a straight face.

It was Nicole who clung to Victoria’s leg who spoke up. “Mommy, he is Mr. Night. He won’t ask us for money.”

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Victoria’s lips twitched at Nicole’s words. It has only been a few days, but she is already siding with him? What would happen if they spent more time together?

With these thoughts in mind, Victoria could only lower her head and gently pat Nicole's head, whispering, "Mr. Night is an adult. When an adult offers a child some food, they won't ask for money. But as I taught you before, you can't just eat food from strangers. So, yes, I will definitely pay the money for you."

Strangers.

Alaric unknowingly furrowed his eyebrows again. From the moment she appeared until now, she had already used that word on him twice.

Alaric was not surprised by her behavior; otherwise, he wouldn't have come earlier to try to win the favor of the two children. He was worried that Victoria wouldn't give him any

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chance and would completely reject him.

It turned out just as he expected.

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And perhaps Nicole was an expert at pulling the rug from under other people's feet, but she spoke up again after hearing Victoria's words, "But Mommy, we've received a lot of money from Mr. Night during the live stream. And if Mr. Night is willing to be my daddy in the future, he won't be a stranger anymore."

Victoria stayed silent at that, but the slight frown on Alaric's face turned into a smile when he heard Nicole's words. His lips curled into a beautiful arc as he gave Nicole a thumbs-up.

“You’re right, Nicole.”

Victoria’s eyebrows twitched uncontrollably. It wasn’t like she could do anything in front of the children. She also didn’t want them to know about some of the grudges she held. It wasn’t necessary to involve the children in her personal matters.

As she thought about this, she could only suggest to Alaric, “Mr. Night, how about we find another place to talk?”

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Alaric raised an eyebrow. “Alright.”

“Nicole, Nate,” Victoria called the names of the children. She then noticed Zack sitting next to them. Judging from his last name and demeanor, he probably wasn’t Alaric’s relative either. Since he was just a child, Victoria didn’t want to vent her anger on him. She smiled at him as well and reminded them, “You three, be good and eat your lunch here. Mr. Night and have something to talk about. We’ll be back soon.”

The three children nodded in unison.

After settling them down, Victoria turned to Alaric and started walking outside.

Seeing this, Alaric quietly and slowly caught up with her pace.

Instead of staying in the school vicinity, Victoria headed straight outside. The security guard at the entrance greeted her when she walked by.

“Are you leaving already, Miss Selwyn? You just got here!”

Victoria smilingly gave him a nod.

After exchanging greetings, the guard suddenly noticed that someone was following Victoria. He took a closer look, only to see that the man usually came to deliver food.

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The guard wanted to greet the person behind Victoria. However, the words in his mouth.

seemed to disappear when he saw the unusually gloomy look on Alaric's face.

He watched as the two of them walked out of the school gate with one person in front of the other.

Soon after, the two of them stopped next to a car not far away.

The guard then sneaked a peek at the duo standing under the sun. They look like they know each other, he thought.

After Victoria stopped walking, she could also hear Alaric's footsteps coming to a halt behind her. She turned around, her gaze filled with mockery as she glared at him.

"Mr. Cadogan? Or should I call you Silent Night?"

Alaric pursed his lips slightly, his Adam's apple bobbed as he replied, "You can call me whatever you want."

Victoria was suddenly at a loss for words upon hearing that unexpected reply. She turned to the other side after a while. "I don't care who you are," she sneered, "and I

don't care what you do. From now on, stay away from my children."

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Alaric chuckled softly. "Victoria, they are also my children."

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The previously composed Victoria was instantly provoked by his words. She abruptly turned her head, her beautiful eyes filled with anger. "What do you mean, they are your children? What right do you have to say that? Do you have any evidence?"

Surprised to see her sudden outburst as if he had stepped on her sore spot, Alaric sighed helplessly after a brief moment. "Do I even need evidence? I only have to look at their appearances and facial features to know that they are my children."

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"Their appearance and facial features?" Victoria sneered at his words. "What's with their appearance? How could they possibly be your children? You're being presumptuous."

Alaric didn't mind her frustration. After all, as the person who had been raising the children alone for the past five years, she had every right to be angry with him.

So, he maintained a calm and gentle tone. "Am I being presumptuous? Fine, then tell me who their father is if it's not me."

"That's none of your business."

"Are you reluctant to tell me because it is none of my business, or because you can't tell me the truth? Perhaps you don't want to admit to my face that the children are mine."

Furious, Victoria insisted, "They are not your children."

"Alright, it's fine if you don't want to admit it. We can do a paternity test."

As soon as Alaric saw those two adorable children, he almost immediately recognized them as his own flesh and blood.

He had never considered doing a paternity test because he didn't need to.

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He felt a different kind of connection when he approached the two kids. It was a closeness and warmth that wasn't there just because of their physical appearance. But if Victoria refused to acknowledge the truth, he didn't mind doing a paternity test.

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When he mentioned the paternity test, Victoria finally regained her composure and looked at Alaric. "We've been divorced for five years. There is nothing between you and me, so my children are not related to you. You have no right to do a paternity test with them.

"You didn't mention that you were pregnant when we got divorced. Do you really think that the children aren't related to me?"

Victoria was taken aback when she heard that.

It was true that Alaric didn't know that she was pregnant when they got divorced. She had to keep her pregnancy from him because he didn't want children.

Looking at her standing there, silent but with a sour expression on her face, Alaric sighed and approached her.

"Don't push me away like this. I just want to fulfill my responsibilities as a father and take care of them."

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"Is it about fulfilling your responsibilities, or are you trying to take the children from me? Where were you when I struggled to raise them on my own? You didn't talk about 'fulfilling responsibilities' back then, did you? Now that they're five years old, you suddenly want to fulfill your responsibilities as a father?"

As she said this, she took a step back and sneered. "You expect to have two five-year-old children after putting in zero effort? There's no such thing as a free lunch, Mr. Cadogan."

Alaric couldn't argue with her on that point.

During the past five years, Alaric indeed hadn't fulfilled any responsibilities of a father. There could be room for forgiveness if it were just one child, but it happened to be two whom Victoria had to raise all by herself. There was no doubt that it had been hard on her.

Alaric couldn't even imagine how she managed to push through until now throughout the five years.

The thought of this made him feel guilty.

"I was wrong in the past, but I will make it up to you in the future. I—"

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"Did I ask you to make up for anything?" Victoria interrupted him before he could finish his sentence. "I don't need you to. I just hope you won't disturb our peaceful life anymore."

After saying that, she turned around to leave.

"I'm afraid that's not possible."

Alaric's words caused her to stop in her tracks.

"What the hell do you mean by that?"

"They are my children. It's a given that I want them to know that I am their father."

Victoria slowly turned around and gaped at him in disbelief.

"You want to be their father even though you hadn't raised them in any way in the past five years?"

"I said that I will make up for more than I owe them."

"Don't even think about it." Agitated, Victoria bit her lip. "No one, including you, can touch my children."

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After saying that, Victoria turned around and left, leaving Alaric standing there.

The security guard who noticed Victoria's return and sensed her anger didn't dare to greet her.

He had been observing her and Alaric from a distance. Although he couldn't hear their conversation, it seemed like they were arguing based on their gestures and expressions.

The security guard even wondered if his eyes were deceiving him, but when he saw Victoria walking back to the school without saying a word, he knew for sure that they had quarreled.

Alaric followed soon after.

Compared to Victoria's rage, the man exuded an almost chilling aura that seemed to envelop the surroundings. As he passed by, the security guard couldn't help but shiver and lament that he had dressed too lightly when he left home today.

Victoria was furious at first, but the look on her face changed in an instant right after she went back to the school compound.

By the time she reached the three children, she was a gentle and amiable woman with

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a smile on her face.

"Mommy, you're back!"

As soon as Nicole saw her return, she rushed into her embrace. She then sneakily looked behind Victoria and asked in a hushed voice, "What do you think, Mommy? Isn't Mr. Night super handsome?"

Victoria felt resigned when she saw the look of admiration in her daughter's eyes. She wanted nothing more than to badmouth Alaric with all her might so that Nicole would find him too repulsive to have any contact with.

But that wouldn't work. She couldn't possibly talk smack about him at the moment when he was indeed treating them well.

As a first-time mother without much experience, Victoria could only rely on her instincts.

Instead of answering Nicole's question, she whispered, "Promise me that you won't eat anything he brings for you anymore, okay?"

Nicole's smile vanished instantly when she heard Victoria's words.

"B-But why, Mommy? Is it because you don't like Mr. Night? Did he make you angry?"

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"Nicky, even though Mr. Night likes you very much, you can't keep eating things he gives you until you formally have a relationship. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Then why don't you let Mr. Night be my daddy, Mommy?"

Victoria didn't say anything to that. She felt like she wasn't getting through to Nicole.

Furthermore, it seemed like the child had an ingrained desire for Alaric to be her father.

She's already acting this way even though I found out so soon. I can't imagine how much worse it would have been if I was too late.

Alaric is such an awful man. How dare he fight over the children with me! Can't he make a few of his own? He has tons of women by his side anyway.

While Victoria was lost in her thoughts, she heard footsteps as Alaric's voice rang out behind her.

"Miss Selwyn, it seems that Nicole really likes me."

Before Victoria could say anything, Alaric added, "Which is why I think you should seriously consider Nicole's suggestion."

How shamelessly despicable!

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As expected, Nicole immediately exclaimed with joy after he said that. "Mommy, Mr. Night agreed! Please consider it!"

Nathan watched quietly from the side with his fingers interlocked, but he didn't say a word.

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Alaric even crouched down beside them with a small smile adorning his handsome face. "After all, it was love at first sight with you, Miss Selwyn. I'm only waiting for you to say yes."

Away

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Victoria couldn't believe that Alaric, the CEO of Cadogan Group, would stoop so low. He dared to claim that he fell in love at first sight with her right in front of their children!

Isn't he ashamed?!

She eventually took a deep breath. She didn't really want to respond to his words in front of their children.

"Mommy, what does 'love at first sight' mean?"

Nicole was being her curious self again.

When Victoria didn't answer the question, another voice rang out. "Nicole, love at first sight means that I really like your Mommy."

Victoria immediately whipped her head and looked at Alaric with an incredulous expression.

Alaric, on the other hand, met her gaze with a slight smile hanging on his lips.

At that moment her eyes met his dark ones, Victoria understood that she had fallen into his trap.

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He deliberately said that after noticing that she didn't want to lose her temper or composure in front of the children.

In fact, he didn't even mind that she knew.

But even if she did, there was nothing she could do about it.

"Woah!" Nicole covered her face with her little hands out of excitement. "You like my Mommy, Mr. Night?"

"Mhm."

Nicole suddenly had a shocked expression. Victoria might be rendered speechless because of her "drama queen" of a daughter, but she had no other choice now. She Nicole's outfit and asked, "Have you finished eating? If you're full, go to your classroom with your brother."

tidied up

"Okay! I'm full!"

Upon hearing that, Nathan immediately put down what he was holding and stood up.

"Nate, please take Nicole back to class. Remember to study hard and don't run around after school. Wait for me to pick you up."

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"Got it, Mommy."

Nathan got up and held Nicole's hand as they started to leave. As they passed by Victoria, Alaric lightly tapped Nathan with his finger.

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Nathan immediately flinched like he had touched fire. After he quickly moved away, he didn't even dare to look at Alaric again.

Ha! He has changed in the blink of an eye! Alaric sighed inwardly. Nathan seemed to trust him before Victoria came, But as soon as his mother arrived, his attitude immediately shifted.

As expected of my son.

Satisfied, Alaric smiled when he heard Victoria say to Zack, "Why don't you go to the classroom with Nicole, hmm?"

Zack didn't nod. He timidly glanced at Alaric and only dared to leave after the man gave him a nod of approval.

Only two people remained here after Zack left.

Victoria then sat down and started cleaning up the leftovers from her children's meal.

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But before she could even touch anything, Alaric stopped her by blocking her.

"Don't touch it."

He whispered, "I bought these, so let me take care of it."

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Victoria paused upon hearing that, and he retracted her outstretched hand that he touched after a while.

"You know how to clean up?"

"I'm only doing what a father should."

There he goes, trying to claim the children again. Not wanting to talk about this with him, Victoria snorted and asked, "That child, did you bring him here to this school?"

Since things had escalated to this point, and he knew whom she was referring to, he didn't see why he should keep denying it.

"Yes."

I thought so. Victoria let out a dry laugh. "So, he's not your relative or anything, is he?"

“He is a relative, but I don’t know him.” After pursing his lips, he sat down across from
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her and looked at her with a solemn expression. “I only did this to fulfill my duty as a father.”

Upon hearing that, Victoria impatiently interrupted him, “It’s not necessary.”

“Victoria, I just want to make amends.”

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“The three of us have lived well for five years. We don’t need you to make any amends.

All we need is a peaceful life. If you insist on making amends, then please get out of our sight and never appear before us again. That would be the best way to make amends.”

Alaric didn’t say another word after she finished speaking. He quietly watched her, his gaze still as dark as ever, and his lips were pressed together firmly.

He might appear calm, but he had no intention to give up.

Victoria knew that with everything he had done, “giving up” wasn’t something Alaric would easily do.

It wasn’t like she was expecting him to do that with just a few words from her anyway.

After a moment, Alaric began cleaning up the things on the table.

Seeing his actions, Victoria thought of what the two children had told her about how he

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ate their leftover hamburger buns.

There was no way the Alaric in the past would do something like this.

But even so, it didn’t mean that Victoria would easily forgive or accept him.

With this in mind, Victoria suddenly stood up and coldly stated, “I hope you won’t disturb us again.”

After saying that, she left the school.

Alaric didn’t come after her this time.

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When Victoria sat in the car, she couldn’t help but rest her head on the steering wheel, letting out an exhausted, long breath.

She knew she had to think of a way to solve this problem.

She would never ever give her children to Alaric!

She was no longer in the mood to work when she returned to the company with the way her thoughts were constantly on her two children and Alaric.

After she managed to endure until the end of the workday, Victoria grabbed her keys

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and left the office directly.

Henry had wanted to chat with her, but Victoria hurriedly passed by him with the excuse of having an urgent matter to attend to.

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The man only raised his eyebrows again and muttered to himself, “Why has she been in such a rush all day?”...

For some reason, Victoria had a sense of foreboding as she rushed to school.

That feeling reached its peak when she got closer to the school.

When she arrived and asked the children's teacher, it was as she suspected-the two children had been taken away.

She knew that because the first words the teacher said upon seeing her were, "Oh, your came too, Miss Selwyn? The children's father already came and took the children with him!"

Victoria had been worried about this since she returned to the company at noon.

Because she refused to let Alaric claim the children as his and denied any connection

between the two children and him, she couldn't stop thinking about whether Alaric Mon,

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would take the children away because he was provoked by her.

This anxiety had been amplified to the max, and now it had come true.

Alaric, you b*stard!

How could he do this? Is he really taking away the children I painstakingly raised just like that?!

Victoria grew furious thinking about this. She couldn't help but vent her anger at the teacher. "Why do you people always do this? Can't you make sure it's me who picks them up? If something happens to them, I won't just sit idly by."

"But-"

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Victoria had already turned around and left before the teacher could say anything else.

After leaving the school, Victoria immediately called Alaric.

Beep, beep.

However, none of the calls she made got through.

What the hell does he want?! Her eyebrows pulled together, forming a deep frown.

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Since she couldn't reach him by phone, Victoria drove to the Cadogan Group.

While driving, Victoria dialed her lawyer's number through the car's Bluetooth.

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It was already the end of the workday when Victoria arrived at the Cadogan Group, and most people had already left.

There were only a few people left in the Cadogan Group's branch office building, but the

security personnel had not left yet. They were taking turns standing guard there.

Victoria walked in directly and found the reception desk. Coincidentally, the receptionist was the same one who had received her before and hadn't left yet.

The receptionist was rather surprised to see Victoria, but before she could speak up, Victoria asked, "Hi, I'd like to see Mr. Levane."

Her request stumped the receptionist momentarily before saying, "Ma'am, Mr. Levane has already left for the day."

"Already? What about Mr. Cadogan? Has he left as well?"

The receptionist carefully recollected and replied, "Mr. Cadogan didn't come to the company this afternoon, and Mr. Levane left ten minutes ago."

Did Alaric not come to work in the afternoon? Where did he go, then?

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Unable to find anyone, Victoria had no choice but to call Terrance, who was surprised to receive Victoria's call. "Miss Selwyn!"

His tone of surprise suggested that he hadn't expected Victoria to call him at this time, and it didn't sound like he had taken her children away either. Could it be that he has nothing to do with this?

For a moment, Victoria was at a loss for what to do. As such, she could only ask Terrance for Alaric.

"Mr. Cadogan? He's not with me, though. Is there something you need to talk to him about, Miss Selwyn? Or perhaps you can try calling his phone."

"His phone isn't reachable," Victoria replied patiently, holding back her anger.

"What? How can that be?!"

"I don't know. Do you have any idea where he went?"

“Well... Mr. Cadogan didn’t show up to his office in the afternoon, and I’m not sure about

his schedule either.” Terrance was conscience–stricken when he answered the question, for Alaric had certainly gone to the kindergarten to dote on the twins.

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However, how could he tell Victoria about it? Dare he tell Victoria about it? Of course

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not! As such, he could only say he wasn’t sure. And for Miss Selwyn to suddenly ask for

Mr. Cadogan’s schedule... she’s found out about something, hasn’t she?! Terrance became nervous, holding the phone tightly.

Sure enough, Victoria sneered after a moment’s silence. “You’re his personal assistant, yet you’re telling me you don’t know his schedule. Do you think I’d believe that?”

Terrance fell silent at that.

“It’s fine if you don’t want to tell me, but you can at least tell me where he lives, right?”

Mr. Cadogan’s address? His eyes lit up as he could certainly share that information. “If you want his address, you should’ve said so earlier, Miss Selwyn. I do know that. I’ll send it to your phone right away.”

After receiving the address, Victoria hung up and drove straight toward the address on her phone.

Alaric must’ve taken the twins away. He was with them at noon, and he didn’t go to work all afternoon either. It’s evident what he intends to do by taking Nicole and Nathan.

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At that, Victoria bit down on her lower lip, trying to control her temper as well as the speed of her car, driving steadily to Alaric's house.

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The address Terrance provided was in an upscale villa community in the city. Victoria initially planned to go directly inside and look for him, but she was stopped outside the villa.

According to security, her license plate number wasn't registered, and she couldn't enter the villa since she was an unfamiliar face.

Unable to reach Alaric's phone, Victoria had no choice but to call Terrance again.

Terrance spent a while on the phone with the villa's security personnel, but they still refused to let her in. In the end, Terrance had to rush over in person.

Victoria could only endure her temper and wait in place.

After about twenty minutes, he rushed over, and after verifying his identity with the security personnel, they finally allowed them to pass.

"Miss Selwyn, shall I take you there?" Since they were already here, Terrance thought he

could save Victoria some effort by taking her there.

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She nodded in response. "Alright. Thank you, Mr. Levane."

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Judging from Terrance's behavior, it didn't seem like he knew Alaric had taken the twins.

away. In fact, he even helped her. Hence, Victoria was naturally polite to the man.

Under Terrance's guidance, they quickly arrived at Alaric's residence.

"We're here, Miss Selwyn."

Victoria gazed at the villa and was about to reach for the doorbell when Terrance suddenly said, "Let me give you the entry code, Miss Selwyn. You can go in directly."

Victoria paused and thought for a moment before nodding. "Alright."

Terrance left right away after telling her the entry code, and Victoria entered the gate smoothly after inputting the code.

The villa was very quiet, and after entering, there was an open-air fountain with lights on both sides, reflecting off each other and illuminating the surroundings as bright as daylight.

Inside, Victoria was greeted with another entry code for the door, which gave her mixed emotions when she entered it, for the code turned out to be her birthday.

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After entering the code, the door opened automatically, and a robotic voice sounded as soon as she stepped in. "Welcome home, master. The indoor ventilation system and air circulation have been activated."

The inside of the house was extremely quiet. Victoria wanted to walk straight in, but when she saw the spotless carpet, she ultimately grabbed the slippers from the shoe cabinet before entering.

The place was so quiet that not a soul could be heard.

At that, Victoria gazed around with furrowed brows, doubting whether Alaric really lived here. How can there be no servants?

With that, she pulled out her phone and called Alaric again. Still, it didn't go through.

Having failed to find anyone on the first floor, she went upstairs, and finally, she heard

the sound of running water coming from one of the ensuite bedrooms.

The bedroom was furnished in a minimalist style, which was similar to Alaric's previous room. This should be his bedroom. Naturally, the person in the bathroom... should be him. But where are Nicole and Nathan?

At that, Victoria rushed out and searched around again, but she never saw the twins.

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She could only return to Alaric's bedroom and rap on the bathroom door. "Alaric? Alaric, come out!"

Moments later, the sound of running water ceased, and Alaric, wearing only a towel around his waist, emerged before Victoria.

As he had just come out of the shower, droplets of water glistened on Alaric's muscular chest, trickling down along his perfectly sculpted abdominal lines and seeping further down.

It could've been a romantic atmosphere. However, Victoria, in her anxious state, didn't pay attention to these details at all. She approached him and interrogated, "Alaric, where are the twins? Give me back my children."

Alaric was initially surprised by Victoria's sudden appearance, but moments later, he realized why she would be there. However, his eyebrows furrowed immediately. "What do *you* mean by that?"

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His words made Victoria frown upsettingly. “Stop pretending! If the twins are not with you, then where are they?”

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Alaric already had a hunch when she asked for the twins earlier. Moreover, Victoria should've brought the twins back home at this time instead of coming here and asking him for the twins.

Thinking of a possibility, Alaric grabbed Victoria's shoulder and squinted his eyes, asking, “Have the twins gone missing?”

Taken aback, Victoria retorted, “What do you mean by that, Alaric? You should know best why the twins have gone missing!”

At that, Alaric frowned. “They've gone missing, huh?”

Victoria fell silent in response. He didn't answer my question or divert the conversation. but instead repeatedly verified the fact that Nathan and Nicole have gone missing. Could it be...

“Were you not the one who took Nathan and Nicole away?”

The next second, Alaric walked past her and out of the bedroom, whereas Victoria Chapter 310 You've Already Figured It Out? hurriedly turned around to catch up.

“Alaric-”

“Hold on.” Alaric signaled her not to speak as he held his phone. However, it was then. he realized his phone was dead.

It would be too slow to wait for it to charge and turn on, so he extended a hand to Victoria. “Give me your phone.”

“Why?”

“To call Terrance.”

Victoria hesitated for a moment but eventually handed him her phone.

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Alaric, on the other hand, called Terrance right away, and as soon as Terrance answered, he immediately informed them that the twins were missing. “Have someone retrieve the kindergarten’s surveillance immediately to see who took the twins away.

Also, have others investigate the surrounding area.”

Meanwhile, Victoria furrowed her brows while listening to his words, and after he hung up the phone, she asked, “Are Nicole and Nathan really not with you?”

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She still didn’t quite believe that anyone besides Alaric would take the children away without informing her. Besides Alaric, who she believed wanted to take the children away from her, Victoria couldn’t think of anyone else.

“Does it look like there have been signs of children here?” Alaric asked while returning her phone.

“No, but who knows if you deliberately hid them away?!”

“Why would I hide them away, Victoria?” Alaric asked helplessly after a split-second stupefaction. “Am I a child trafficker?”

3/7

While biting her lower lip, Victoria thought, You might not be a child trafficker, but you’re more terrifying than one. However, she ultimately didn’t voice her thoughts.

Just then, Alaric, who had been standing in place talking to her, walked toward the wardrobe. Thinking he was trying to avoid the situation, Victoria followed him again.

“Are you sure the twins aren’t here? Are you not lying to me, Alaric? I can’t think of

anyone else but you who'd take Nicole and Nathan away."

Alaric opened the wardrobe expressionlessly and paused momentarily after hearing her words, then said, "First, explain clearly what the teacher said to you when you went to
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pick them up."

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Victoria recalled the teacher telling her that the children's father had come to pick them
1. up.

After explaining the situation truthfully, Alaric let out a cold laugh. "Father? I left at noon. Who the hell picked them up? Is the teacher out of their mind?"

Victoria was rendered at a loss for words.

Alaric was about to pick out a shirt when something occurred to him, and his countenance turned grimmer. He suddenly turned his head and stared at Victoria.

"Think carefully. Is there really no one else besides me who'd take the twins away?"

Nicole and Nathan aren't ordinary children. They're very smart and wouldn't simply walk away with strangers."

Victoria fell silent at that. Yeah, Nicole and Nathan aren't ordinary kids. They have always been exceptionally clever. Even if Nicole is a little naive, Nathan would never simply get into a stranger's car. In other words, someone familiar must've taken them!

However, who could have them get into their car willingly, address them as 'father,' and even have the motive to take them away?

Victoria pondered seriously for a while, then lifted her gaze. "I really can't think of

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anyone else but you."

B

Alaric was rendered speechless, and he almost laughed with anger. “Victoria Selwyn, do you think I’d waste my time telling you all this if I really have any motives? What can you do to me even if I tell you straight that the twins are here with me?”

Victoria pursed her lips, looking somewhat stubborn. “Who else could it *be* besides *you*, though?”

“Who do you think?” Alaric retorted.

“What do you mean? Have you already figured it out?”

Alaric replied to her with a cold snort and put on a white dress shirt while saying, “You’ll find out soon enough.”

Seeing him like that, Victoria couldn’t help but think that he was teasing her, and just as she was about to press on, Alaric suddenly pulled off the towel around his waist.

Victoria, who hadn’t paid attention to anything before, finally reacted, and she stared wide-eyed at Alaric with incredulity.

A long while later, Alaric smirked and asked, “Have you seen enough?”

5/7

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His voice brought Victoria back to reality, and she snapped at once. “Are *you* out of your mind?!”

“Isn’t it because you want to watch me change that you’ve been standing here instead of leaving?” Alaric pressed his lips into a fine line, put on his pants indifferently, fastened his belt, and clasped up the belt buckle expressionlessly.

Though Victoria had seen him in his birthday suit five years ago, still...

Her ears flushed, but at the thought of how shameless Alaric behaved, she couldn't help wanting to upset him. "Well, jokes on you. I've seen so many hunks over my five years abroad that I've gotten sick and tired of them. Why would I stick around to watch you?"

Alaric paused from buttoning his shirt at that, and his aura changed accordingly.

He slowly turned his head around, his raven-black eyes fixed intently on Victoria. "What did you say?"

"Did *you* not hear me? Shall I repeat it to you?"

He didn't answer but continued to stare intently at her.

Mon,

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After a long while, he withdrew his gaze and said icily, "Let's find the twins first."

Tn

If it weren't that the twins were currently missing, Alaric would've made sure she knew the consequences of deliberately provoking him.

"If you didn't take Nicole and Nathan away, then it has nothing to do with you. I will find them myself!" Victoria snapped angrily before walking away.

After descending the stairs and exiting the villa, she came face to face with a black sedan parked in front of her.

Seeing this car, Victoria was speechless. He doesn't even bother hiding anymore now that I've discovered him, eh?

The car window rolled down, and Alaric's handsome, indifferent side profile appeared.

"Get in."

"No need. I'll look for them myself."

“I know where they are.”

His words made Victoria stop, and he gazed intently at her. “Get in. I’ll take you to them.”

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