

Departure with a Belly Chapter 231

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Chapter 231

Victoria never expected something like this would happen at her children's school.

At first, she decided to send them there because she liked the environment. While abroad, Nicole and Nathan were still young and did not understand the complexity of societal taboos. As they gradually grew older, the disadvantages of being in a single-parent family would slowly be exposed to their peers.

Then, she remembered having similar experiences during her childhood. Her father doted on her, and being the young lady of the powerful Selwyn Family, the others dared not band together to bully her. Instead, they kept flattering her because of her status.

At first, she was happy that everyone was willing to befriend her because she considered herself an outcast. Coming from a single-parent family, she thought others would think of her differently and collectively exclude her. Therefore, when everyone seemed willing to befriend her, she thought everyone around her was kind.

That was until she eavesdropped on them badmouthing her.

"Hey, tell you what. Victoria Selwyn is a freak."

"A freak? How so?"

"I heard that her mother was a wh*re and ran off with another man right after giving

birth to her. My mom said we shouldn't be friends with her because she's a bad influence."

"Gosh! Is Victoria's mother really a wh*re?"

"It's true!"

"That's terrifying! We should stay away from her."

www.

When the young Victoria heard that discussion, her eyes reddened. Ever since then, she did not wait for the others to ghost her because she avoided them first.

She was depressed at a young age. It was until the time that group began

badmouthing her again that things changed. Back then, she was hiding in the

corner, listening to them talk, but their conversation fell into the young Alaric's ears.

He immediately kicked over a chair **in** the classroom and gestured to beat them,

making the crowd disperse immediately.

Once the group left, he pulled Victoria out from the corner. "Snowball, are you going to hide here while they say bad things about you?"

She bowed her head and said nothing.

He stared at her for a long while and embraced her. "From now on, no one will dare to badmouth you with me by your side."

Afterward, Victoria gradually grew bolder and had a healthier mentality because of

Alaric's presence. However...

She returned from her daze and looked toward Nicole. Every child was different, and the things they encountered while growing up also varied. Sometimes, she would regret her decision to maintain her children in a single-parent family and not do 'enough' for them. Still, there was one thing she did not regret—giving birth to them.

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While thinking of that, Victoria held Nicole in her arms and closed her eyes. "Don't Nicole. No one will ever laugh at you or Nathan with me here."

worry,

Nicole did not think much about it and smilingly commented, "I'm fine, Mommy. You have nothing to worry about because Nathan will protect me if they laugh at me."

"Hm. Mommy will protect both of you."

Inside the penthouse suite in a hotel, Alaric entered his room with a solemn expression and saw two people on the couch. One was his assistant, Terrance, and the other was Claudia.

When Alaric saw her, a trace of surprise flashed across his eyes.

"Al." After seeing him, Claudia immediately shot up. "You're finally home."

However, the surprise only lasted for a moment because Alaric returned to his emotionless self while heading further into the room. "How did you get in?" Once he asked, he glared sternly at Terrance, who guiltily looked away, knowing Alaric blamed him for letting her in.

Naturally, Terrance would not just let anyone into the room, but that woman was Claudia. Although she and Alaric were not a couple, everyone in the city knew she had frequently visited Alaric's mother. Hence, everyone thought it was in due time before she married him.

In the meantime, Claudia understood what Alaric meant and felt somewhat embarrassed, but she could only explain, "Don't be mad at Mr. Levane. I demanded him to let me in. I told him I would cause a scene if he didn't."

Hearing that, Alaric paused and gazed at her. "Is that so?" She nodded weakly but heard Alaric sneer. "You'll cause a scene if he doesn't let you in? When have you become so unreasonable?"

Somewhat pale, she tried to explain, "Al, I was just..."

Chapter 21 almen

Not expecting Alaric would be so mean to Claudia, Terrance knew a storm was coming and was afraid to stay any longer. He immediately packed up his things and announced, "Miss Johnson has something to tell you, Mr. Cadogan, so I'll take my leave."

His act of escaping after causing trouble earned him a scoff from Alaric. Seeing he was not asked to stay, he grabbed his things and ran.

Once he was gone, the hotel room fell silent.

Claudia stared at Alaric, feeling embarrassed. Luckily, Terrance was Alaric's

assistant because if it had been someone else, she would not have been able to withstand such humiliation. “Al, you’ve been gone the whole day. I tried to call, but your phone was off. Were you busy today? Have you eaten? If you hadn’t, why don’t we-”

“Claudia,” Alaric coldly uttered her name.

She looked at him, stammering, “W–What’s the matter?”

“I told you. Stop wasting your time on me.”

When she heard that, her eyes instantly reddened. “H–How is that wasting my time? I like you and want to do something for you, and I believe that as long as I stay with you, you’ll soon discover-”

“I won’t.” He rejected her without hesitation, leaving her frozen in place. Fixing his gaze on her face, he frowned. “I thought I made myself clear five years ago. If you don’t get it still, I can tell you again. I only see you as my savior, so don’t waste your effort on me. It won’t work, no matter how long you try. Get it?”

Claudia’s eyes reddened even more following his words, and tears ran down her cheeks while she bit her lips. “No, I don’t get it. We were on good terms five years ago, and you promised me I would be Mrs. Cadogan. Why did things change after Victoria left? Do you fall in love with whoever leaves you?”

Alaric frowned as he did not plan to continue this conversation. “It’s getting late. Go home.”

“No, I won’t!”

After giving her a cold stare, he ordered, “I’ll get Terrance to send you home.”

“No!” She threw herself forward to hug him. “Al, don’t chase me away. Don’t do this to me. I just like you a lot. That’s all...”

Suddenly, she smelled a faint scent of perfume on the man’s body.

Chapter 232

Perfume... Claudia was crying and immediately tensed up. When did Alaric ever have the smell of perfume on him in the last five years? The fragrance was faint, like a scent brought over by the breeze, unnoticeable if one was not paying attention. It was impossible that he had been to the bar or a business gathering because women there would not use such faint fragrances.

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While Claudia was lost in her thoughts, Alaric roughly removed her hands, which made her stagger backward. Then, she saw his wolf-üke eyes glaring at her. “Do not touch me!”

It was the first time she saw such an expression from him, and she was stupefied in her place, not daring to move forward. Still, she could not forget the perfume on him and was unsettled. “Okay. I won’t touch you, but be honest with me. Where did the perfume on your body come from? You can dislike me, but what about other women?”

Perfume? Alaric seemed slightly stunned and raised his arm to take a sniff. Like what Claudia said, there was a faint fragrance on him.

It was her fragrance. Indeed, they were sitting on the same horse with her in his

arms for a long time. How could she not transfer her scent onto his body?

While Alaric's actions were done casually, they still shocked Claudia. She was uninvolved in this matter, so she could see the hostility in his eyes and expression instantly reduced; he even raised his arm to take a sniff. Once he did, he seemed to become gentler.

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If she had a mirror, she would notice her expression looked twisted too. “Who is it?” She reflexively asked upon guessing a possibility.

When he heard that, he woke up from his daze and shot her a cold glare. “I don't have to tell you what happens in my private life, do I?”

She heard that and bit her lips with an ashen face. Seeing that he was so unwelcoming, she could not take it anymore and left.

Bang!

The hotel door was slammed so hard that the doorframe shook, but Alaric did not mind that because all that mattered to him was that she was gone. Then, he went to take a shower.

He recalled what transpired that day and the words Victoria had told him, arousing his frustration. He quickly showered and exited the bathroom with his towel wrapped around his lower body. Then, he found his phone and called Jordan, who was at the bar when he received the call. The atmosphere was blaring.

“Get out of there,” Alaric demanded.

Afraid to offend him, Jordan soon found a quiet spot to talk. “What's the matter?”

Alaric seemed to have realized something and asked coldly, “Does she have

something to ask of you?”

At first, Jordan could not comprehend what he meant. “Who?”

A few seconds of silence later, Alaric suppressed his temper and retorted, “Who else?”

When Jordan heard that tone, he took some time to realize who they were talking about. “You mean Victoria Selwyn? I don’t think she has anything to ask of me.”

“Then, why did she seek you out? How did you get to know her?”

After discovering their relationship during the daytime, Alaric asked Jordan, who briefly explained how he and Victoria met. Then, he added, “I previously lent her **my** coat during an auction. She said she wanted to return **it** to me, so I asked her to meet me at the facility. What’s wrong?”

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“She came to return your coat?” Alaric noticed a loophole and asked, “You **said** you lent her your coat during an auction. Which auction?”

“**Don’t** you know? **You** were there too. What’s going on? Don’t tell me you didn’t notice her that day?”

Silence.

“Are you for real?”

“Tell me, what did she say to you after returning your coat?”

This time, it was Jordan’s turn to stay silent and speak after a while, “Alaric, though we are business partners, we’re also friends, right? Even if we are, you have no right to meddle in everything. Why do you care about what she told me?”

However, Alaric did not buy that. “Are you telling me or not?”

“F*ck, Alaric.” In the end, Jordan gave in to Alaric’s threats and told him what

happened yesterday.

After the phone call, Alaric stared at the phone and thought of something. He smiled at t he thought of what would happen tomorrow, and his mood brightened

slightly. Before heading to bed, he signed into the application and peeked at the two children's accounts.

They were on the same plane while returning from abroad, so they might be heading for the same destinations. Indeed, he found the account's profile page and noticed the IP address was in Jasea too.

What

a coincidence. We were in the same city abroad and took the same plane back. Even th ough it's been a while, they're still in Jasea. Are their parents planning on staying here p ermanently? Children... While thinking of that, Alaric turned upset. Wouldn't our child be the same age as them if Victoria and I hadn't divorced?

When Victoria awoke the following day, she noticed Nicole was lying on her, and the tiny head was nudging against her arms. Right after she moved, she heard Nicole mutte r, "Mommy, I'm tired. I want a hug."

Hugging her, Victoria reached *for* her phone and looked at the time. Then, she urged her daughter, "You need to get up. You have school today."

Nicole got up after staying in her mother's arms for a few more seconds. The children were well-behaved and would not sleep in once Victoria told them to get up. Once Nicole got out of bed, she changed her clothes while Victoria was busy with other things. While they were abroad, the kids were used to dressing themselves **as** if they were adults. Victoria had to make them breakfast.

When Victoria approached the kitchen, she heard movement inside and realized Teresa was making breakfast. Though it had been over two weeks, she still had not gotten used to having a maid at home.

When Teresa noticed Victoria, she greeted her warmly. Later, Bane woke up as well,

and everyone had breakfast together. Subsequently, he offered to send Victoria to work, to which she declined, “N–No need. I can go there myself.”

He offered again. “How about I send the kids to school?”

She bit her lower lip and awkwardly said, “Bane, you don’t have to do all that. Aren’t you busy? You can get on with your work. I can send them to school on my way to work, so-”

Before she finished, he approached her and gently grabbed her wrist. “Victoria, I’m starting to grow impatient.”

She was startled.

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He smiled and gently uttered, “Let me express my feelings for you. Please?”

Chapter 233

Ultimately, Victoria rejected Bane’s offer to send her to work but agreed to let him send the children to school while she went to work alone. Since she was not financially stable, she had yet to buy a car, which was ironic. She was the boss, but she had to take public transportation to work while her employee, Henry, had purchased a car for himself.

On her way to work, Summer, who was on the other side of the ocean, called. “My dear Victoria, mwah, how are you? I haven’t called you in a while. How are things with your company?”

Judging from her tone, Victoria could guess she was doing well. She smiled and asked, “It’s going great. How about you?”

“Don’t even mention it. My supervisor is a devil. I gotta tell you, Victoria, I’ve never seen a *more* exploiting boss in my entire life! How can he be so evil?”

While listening to Summer complain about her boss, Victoria occasionally concurred with her. Summer continued for ten minutes before saying, "Forget it.

Let's not talk about him. Just thinking about him makes me want to complain even more."

"Okay."

"By the way, how are you and Fiona getting along? I heard she bought a vintage house especially for you to rent. It seems you guys are getting along well, so much so that you might have forgotten about me when I return."

At the mention of Fiona, Victoria became upset. Ever since Fiona secretly implied she did not want to live with them anymore, Victoria moved out overnight, lest to cause any trouble for her.

Victoria did not blame her, but she did not contact her either. When she tried to call Fiona but received perfunctory replies, she knew she probably did not want to stay in contact. As a grown-up, she would not pester the other party any further if that was the case.

Since Summer was not physically present, Victoria did not want to bother her with such matters. In the end, she joked, "It's a beautiful place, so don't worry. There will be a spot for you if you visit."

"Uh-huh. So, we've reached an agreement. You must save me the best spot, which I will take over once I go there."

Okay. Okay."

After a while, Summer began asking Victoria about her relationship with Bane. As usual, Victoria was reluctant to talk about it, so Summer could only sigh. "Fine, but you should give it another thought. It's a decision about the rest of your life."

“I know. I know. You’re so persistent about this.”

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“Hey, I’m just worried for you. Why? Don’t you want me to care about you anymore? I knew it. You no longer want me anymore now that you have Fiona.”

Summer began acting spoiled, and Victoria laughed and spoke to her while paying attention to the station’s announcement. “Alright, I’m at my stop. Let’s talk later.”

“Sure. Talk soon.”

After ending the call, Victoria left the subway station. Since she and Jordan agreed to meet that day, she walked straight to Villower Group because it was near her stop and went to the reception desk. “Hello, I’m here to meet with Mr. Floyd.”

The receptionist glanced at Victoria’s outfit and then at her face before lazily asking, “And you are?”

She replied with seriousness, “My last name is Selwyn. I made an appointment with Mr. Floyd yesterday.”

At first, the receptionist did not take Victoria seriously, but after hearing her last name was Selwyn, the receptionist immediately changed her attitude. “Excuse me, are you Miss Victoria Selwyn?”

The sudden change in demeanor shocked Victoria, who nodded. “Yes.”

“Here’s the thing, Miss Selwyn, Mr. Floyd has instructed us to bring you upstairs when you arrive.”

“Oh?” That was quite surprising for Victoria. “How considerate.”

The receptionist gave her a mysterious smile and led her to the elevator. “This is Mr. Floyd’s designated elevator. You can head straight to the top floor, Miss Selwyn.”

Once Victoria entered the elevator, the receptionist entered the passcode and sent

her to the top. When the elevator closed, she suddenly remembered she had not asked which office Jordan was **in**. Yet, her question was answered when she arrived at the top floor, realizing only one office was there.

The door was closed, so she approached it and knocked. Then, she heard a voice from inside. "Come in."

That voice surprised her.

Although she and Jordan were not so familiar to the point that she could recognize his voice immediately, that voice, which was deliberately lowered, was inexplicably familiar. While she was standing there, thinking, the office door suddenly opened, and a handsome face appeared before her eyes.

The man was tall and lean, had black hair, and a gaze that was cold as eyes. It was Alaric!

Seeing his face, she instantly felt played and speechless. Then, she turned around, ready to leave.

"Aren't you here to look for someone? Leaving so soon?"

His gentle reminder made Victoria stop and remember she was here to look for Jordan. Turning around, she demanded, "Where's Jordan Floyd?"

Alaric asked, "Are you here to discuss work with him?" He tugged his lips into a smug smile. "Trying to get investors, aren't you?"

Victoria's complexion turned slightly pale when she heard that. If her memory served her right, she never told Alaric she wanted Jordan to invest in her company. How did he find out? Has he been keeping tabs on me? At the thought of that possibility, she turned paler. The children...

"Why didn't you come to me if you wanted investments?"

Meanwhile, she did not say anything because she was still observing Alaric's expression. He might not be so calm now if he knew about the children. If that were the case, how did he know she was here to get Jordan to invest in her company?"

Seeing her silence, he could guess what she was thinking, so he narrowed his eyes and explained, "He's afraid to offend me, so if you're looking for investors, I'd suggest you come to me."

At that, Victoria withdrew her gaze because she was finally sure he had no idea about the kids. She released a breath of relief and rejected him. "No, thank you. If he's afraid to offend you, I'll find other investors."

However, Alaric's expression darkened as he coldly threatened, "Do you think anyone would invest in your tiny, trashy company without my consent?"

She questioned after a while, "So, you're keen on giving me a hard time?"

Instead of replying, he asked, "Am I giving you a hard time, or are you trying your hardest to dissociate yourself from me?"

The frowning woman argued, "You and I have nothing to do with each other."

"Are you sure about that?" He chuckled softly and taunted, "We'd been together for two years and had kissed, hugged, and slept together. How is that nothing?"

Chapter 234

The memories Alaric brought up were all intimate moments he had shared with Victoria. Her lashes subtly fluttered, and her crimson lips moved. In the end, she stared at him before saying, "Alaric, you're utterly shameless."

He already has Claudia, yet he still wants to entangle himself with me. Who does he think he is? It's truly laughable. Hasn't he hurt me enough five years ago?

"Shameless?" He approached closer with each step, cornering her. As she attempted to flee, he extended his arm and firmly pressed his hand against the wall,

blocking her path. With pursed lips, he uttered, "You did not say that when you were in bed with me."

Slap!

Unable to control herself, she struck him across the cheek.

Caught off guard by her sudden slap, he was taken aback as his head turned to the side. In response to her action, he swiftly caught hold of her wrist, leaning in and attempting to kiss her.

Slap!

Victoria slapped him again in her haste. "Alaric, you've crossed the line! The things you brought up are all in the past! We've been divorced for five years!"

Some of her words struck a nerve with Alaric and caused his movements to halt. He stared at her from an extremely close distance, panting heavily. **Five** years... It's been five years already, and I thought my entire life had come to an end.

As he stood there, unmoving and panting, she confirmed that he had stopped his actions. Seizing the opportunity, she pushed him away and turned to leave.

"Victoria, you're just going to walk away like this? You sure are heartless."

She sneered inwardly. Who is the heartless one here? He was the one who didn't want the children and initiated the divorce at the Civil Affairs Bureau. And now, he dares to accuse me of being heartless?

"You don't care about anything? Not even Grandma?" When she heard him mention Griselda, her footsteps momentarily paused. Grandma, I do miss her, but...

They had divorced, and if she were to visit Griselda now...

"She misses you," Alaric added.

Those few words nearly crumbled Victoria's defense, but she managed to control

herself at that critical moment. While Griselda was indeed Victoria's soft spot, it was not a reason for him to manipulate her.

To ensure that he would not utter such words to her again in the future, she could only speak harshly at **that** moment, "And what about it?" She turned her head and looked at him with red eyes. "Since I divorced you, she's no longer my family. She's yours, so take care of her yourself."

Hearing her words, Alaric stood frozen in place. It seemed he had not anticipated that she would go as far as ignoring Griselda. After a moment, he finally tugged at his lips, his eyes filled with mockery. "Is that so? In that case, I'll deliver your words, **so** she'll forget about you."

As the words fell, Victoria felt an intense pain in her heart. She did not want to admit that Griselda was no longer her family either because Griselda held a special place in her heart. Still, harsh words had been spoken and could not be retracted. Even **if** they were, it would not change the situation.

She nearly bit her lip until it bled. In the end, she stated, "Suit yourself."

Leaving those words behind, she promptly left. As she took the same elevator and exited it, she encountered Jordan, who had just returned from outside. Noticing the slight redness in her eyes, he was taken aback and quickly approached to stop her. "Miss Selwyn? What happened?"

Damn it. I only agreed to lend my place and space to Alaric. He wouldn't have made her cry, would he?

As he looked into the woman's teary eyes, Jordan was in deep regret and felt like a complete idiot. Despite his intention to approach her cautiously and inquire about her well-being, Victoria simply brushed past him and walked away without intending

to engage in conversation.

He stood motionlessly, unable to shake off the image of her cold eyes with suppressed tears; guilt was the only thing left in his heart. Just as he was about to catch up to her, she stopped and turned around to approach him. “Mr. Floyd.”

Jordan replied, “Yes?”

“You have no intention to invest in my company at all, don’t you?”

“What?” He was taken aback. “I—Invest in your company? Did you start a company?”

Wait, you mean that’s what you wanted to discuss when you mentioned work?”

As she heard his response, a hint of doubt appeared in the corner of her eyes. “What else could it be?”

“I thought you had come to your senses and finally agreed to work at my company, and it was that beast, Alaric, who didn’t want it and came to stop you.”

She was speechless by Jordan’s presumption. So, that’s how it is. He’s unaware as well. It appears that Alaric has conducted his investigation, but how did he discover it? For now, it looks like he only knows about my intention to seek investment from Jordan. Is it merely a coincidence, or...

“Miss Selwyn, you started a company? Where is it?” Jordan asked with interest.

Hearing his question, she snapped back to reality and shook her head. “It doesn’t matter anymore.”

“Why? Didn’t you just say you’d like my investment?”

“Yes, but are you willing to offend Alaric for the sake of our company’s investment?”

He fell silent instantly and pursed his lips. Although Alaric and I seem to have a good relationship at the moment, I’m certain that if I entertain any thoughts of coveting his woman, he will immediately turn against me.

“Now, if you’ll excuse me.” Victoria did not trouble him further and nodded briefly before leaving. After exiting Villower Group, she walked out into the sunlight. It was not until she boarded the subway and found a seat that she wearily *closed* her eyes. In her mind, Alaric’s words echoed.

“You don’t care about anything? Not even Grandma?”

“She misses you.”

“Is that so? In that case, I’ll deliver your words, so she’ll forget about you.”

At that, she abruptly opened her eyes, and her breathing became erratic. She urged herself to stop dwelling on it, knowing that her sanity would shatter if she allowed

those thoughts to persist.

Without a shred of doubt, she was certain Griselda missed her. Throughout her years abroad, Victoria entertained the idea of secretly returning to see her, even if it

was just for a glance.

However, whenever she recalled their divorce, she knew her return would only lead to more complications. She also feared that her children would be exposed. In the end, she could only ruthlessly suppress her longing. That led to her disconnection

with Griselda all these years.

I wonder how she’s doing now Is she leading a good life? After five years, how much of her white hair has proved the scars of time? If she were to see me would she still be willing to acknowledge me? Or perhaps, she blames me now for not saying goodbye when I left. She must’ve resented me, so how could she miss me? Beads of tears rolled down her cheeks and slipped into her collar. Victoria raised her hand and gently wiped them away, acting as if nothing had happened.

Chapter 235

At the top-floor office, Jordan ascended the stairs and made his way to find Alaric.

“Hey, I thought she wanted to join my company, but it turns out that she came for investment. Did you already know about this and keep it from me? And did you notice how terrible she looked when she left the building? Did you make her cry?”

Alaric, who had been leaning against the wall, paused for a moment upon hearing this, and then a mocking smile slowly spread across his lips. “Is that so?”

So, she can cry, and I thought she was heartless. How rare.

“What? I can tell you don’t believe it from how you look. Damn. You truly have no idea how much of a jerk you are, don’t you? Making someone cry, yet you remain so indifferent.”

Hearing this, Alaric did not respond. He just stood there with pursed lips and a slightly pale complexion.

However, the careless Jordan continued to ramble on without noticing anything amiss. “I don’t even understand what you’re trying to achieve with this attitude. At first, I thought you wanted to win her back, but now, I’m starting to suspect that you don’t want to see her, so you deliberately upset her. Is that right?”

Alaric remained silent.

Receiving no response, Jordan turned his gaze toward Alaric and noticed the latter leaning pale against the wall with beads of sweat forming on his forehead.

He blinked as he thought he might have been mistaken. He then approached Alaric to carefully confirm his observation. Indeed, it was sweat glistening on Alaric’s forehead. A few seconds later, he exclaimed, “Wow. I can’t believe you’re sweating in this cold weather.”

Silent, Alaric endured the discomfort and looked at Jordan with a gaze that seemed to say, “Idiot.”

After receiving his gaze, Jordan even dared to ask, "Is it because you're wearing too many layers?"

The assistant at the back, Robin Gray, could not stand it anymore and reminded, "Mr. Floyd, Mr. Cadogan has gastritis, remember?"

Jordan's face drastically changed upon hearing this. "Oh, right, you do. Oh no, Alaric, is your stomach acting up?"

Alaric did not bother to respond and walked toward the elevator with a cold expression.

"Ignoring me? So, you don't need my help?"

"No. It's not that serious," Alaric replied coldly.

"Fine."

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Although Jordan was aware of Alaric's gastritis, he did not show excessive concern.

After all, Alaric had experienced occasional flare-ups in the past, and he had witnessed them firsthand. He knew Alaric had always been resilient and could endure such pain.

Still...

He ultimately advised, "Considering your troubled stomach, I suggest you take some time to take care of it. Don't let it progress into stomach cancer. I wouldn't want to see you die young."

Hearing his advice, Alaric gave him a cold glance. "Would it hurt for you to hold your tongue?"

Jordan immediately gestured a motion of zipping his lips shut. After Alaric left, **Jordan** stood still with his hand on his chin as he contemplated. Robin could not

help but ask, “Mr. Floyd, should we just let him go like that? What if something happens?”

“What are you worrying about? He’s an iron man. Have you ever seen him collapse? If something were seriously wrong, he wouldn’t have left just now. And why should it be our concern anyway?”

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Hearing his words, Robin surprisingly found them reasonable. “Well, that’s true.”

“Tsk. How annoying. How did Victoria end up having a relationship with Alaric?”

Jordan had a genuine interest in her, not the fleeting kind he had in his previous flings. She was the only one who truly captivated him with her presence among all the relationships he had indulged in over the years.

As he reminisced about her from yesterday at the equestrian field, dressed in her riding attire with her flowing locks of hair, he could not suppress the restlessness stirring in his heart. Why did she have to be Alaric’s woman? If she were to be with someone beside him...

Having been with Jordan for a long time, Robin seemed to grasp his thoughts and said, “Mr. Floyd, if you’re interested in her, why not pursue her? After all, their relationship is in the past, and Miss Selwyn is currently single. There’s nothing wrong with you expressing your feelings toward her.”

“You don’t understand. It may seem that way, but have you seen Alaric’s state? He **can’t** get over her at all. If I were to pursue her, wouldn’t that be going against him?”

Confused, Robin asked, “Doesn’t Mr. Cadogan have a fiance?”

“You mean Claudia? Her, a fiance?”

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“But that’s what people say. And for so many years, Mr. Cadogan-”

“Are you suggesting that Claudia has been the only one around Alaric all these years, which is why people assume she’s his fiance?”

Robin nodded.

“Use your brain and think. Why hasn’t he officially gotten engaged to Claudia if he’s been single all these years? It’s been five years, and if they truly wanted to be together, they would’ve done so by now.”

Speechless, Robin was unable to refute.

Just as Victoria returned to the company, Henry handed her a proposal. “This is what I came up with yesterday. If we manage to secure investments from both the Cadogan and Floyd Corporations, it’ll benefit our company. Although the effects may not be as substantial as we hope, it’s still a positive stride for us at this stage.”

After a brief moment of pondering the proposal, she took it and placed it on the desk before taking her seat in silence.

Noticing her lack of enthusiasm, he guessed what was happening and sat on the chair before her. “What’s wrong? Not interested in reading it? Should I read it to you?”

Victoria sighed. “No need. It’s all pointless now.”

Like Alaric had said, as long as he disagreed, who would dare to risk investing in her small and newly established company?

She gazed at the proposal on the desk with a somewhat defeated expression. “I’m starting to question if returning to the country to start a company was a good idea after a ll.”

As Henry had reached a management level before, he could also deduce the reasons behind Victoria’s current demeanor to some extent. “Miss Selwyn, although

you are my boss, I'm older than you and have accumulated more experience in certain matters. As someone older, I would like to offer you some words of advice."

With her silence, he continued, "Honestly, if you're no longer in a relationship with him, why would it matter if your business partner is him?"

Upon hearing this, she paused and glanced up at him.

He smiled faintly in response. "What's wrong? Did I say something inappropriate? I genuinely want what's best for the company, so I dare to speak frankly to you. Are you sure that not returning to the country to start a company means you won't encounter setbacks? Entrepreneurship is never smooth sailing. Difficulties are inevitable along the way. If starting a company was that easy, anyone could do it, and I wouldn't be here in management. Don't you think so?"

"Right."

"So, what's the problem with directly cooperating with Cadogan Group? As long as it benefits the company, why resist it? Unless you still can't get over him."

As Victoria heard this, she suddenly furrowed her brows and was seemingly surprised. "What did you say? I can't get over him?"

8/8

He smiled. "You're agitated. Looks like I hit the mark."

Chapter 236

Henry's remarks made Victoria extremely uncomfortable. Moreover, his confident expression and tone made it seem as if what he said was indeed true. What did not exist was being spoken of as if it had become a reality.

"If you have truly moved on from him, you should be nonchalant upon hearing me say this. After all, when a wound is healed, you don't feel anything when touched."

“Is that so?” She chuckled lightly. “Mr. Poole... While a healed wound may not hurt when lightly touched, if you take a stick and forcefully strike it, can you be certain it won’t hurt?”

After hearing her response, he raised an eyebrow. “Just making a casual remark. Is it necessary to take it so seriously? Or perhaps, you’re implying that the wounded hasn’t fully recovered from their severe wounds.”

As Victoria heard this, a cold smile gradually appeared on the corners of her lips. “You’re mistaken. I honestly don’t mind.”

Henry shrugged. “Miss Selwyn, if you can move on and focus on your career, it would be the best outcome for employees like us.” At this point, he decided not to probe further and stopped the conversation. “The materials are on the desk, but I

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suppose you don’t require them anymore. I’ll step out and attend to my duties. By the way, we have a new candidate today, though I’m unsure if they’ll join. If you need any assistance, feel free to reach out.”

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After he left, Victoria remained alone in the office. The emotions stirred up by his remarks gradually calmed down. Once she settled her mind, she began to see some validity in what Henry had said, albeit his infuriating words.

Since she had already decided to move on and treat Alaric as a stranger, why would she be repulsed by cooperating with him? However, she was worried about another point—her children, Nicole and Nathan.

Once she collaborated with Cadogan Group, she knew there would be inevitable interactions with Alaric in the future, and as time passed...

While others might not have noticed, she was keenly aware her children bore a subtle resemblance to him. However, due to their young age and still-developing features, their similarities were not pronounced.

If people were to recognize the parent-child relationship, it would undoubtedly be remarked upon how strikingly the children resembled their father. However, if they were unaware of the connection, they would not perceive any resemblance between these two children and him.

If he were to discover the children's existence, would he try to take them away from her? In theory, he should've already moved on with Claudia after I left, and they might even have children by now, right? It's unlikely he'll come and try to take my children away, isn't it? But who knows if there's a possibility?

Victoria was deeply concerned. She had initially believed that starting her company in Jasea would enable her to overcome all obstacles, but she already felt like surrendering at the first sign of difficulty. Regardless, the mere thought of that possibility was enough to make her feel utterly unwilling to accept it.

Never mind, I'll come up with another solution.

The interviewee was informed about the company's recent establishment and lack of resources. Despite acknowledging Henry's impressive credentials, the interviewee shook their head and decided to leave. Just before departing, they expressed their opinion to Henry, saying, "I believe it's more dependable to work for a well-established company. Your small startup lacks support, and what if it fails in the future?"

After saying that, they simply picked up their briefcase and left without mercy.

When Victoria came out, Henry was still watching them leave.

Chapter 236 Shameless

“Didn’t work out?”

He shook his head and sighed. “They preferred a well-established company over our small startup.”

She stood quietly in place for a while, then suddenly leaned on the desk with both hands and asked, “Mr. Poole, what do you think about finding a prominent international conglomerate to support us?”

“Even if we can’t secure one, it’ll still be beneficial to find someone who can support

1. us. However, as a small company, we must consider the current job market. Many

people here are seeking stable employment. Even if we approach a big international conglomerate, they might not be familiar with the local business landscape. While we may find a few individuals willing to join us, the number may not be significant.” At this, Victoria had some preliminary ideas. “So, you’re saying this could still be a viable option as a last resort?”

“Yes, that’s right. So, are you implying that you have some potential overseas backing?” Henry’s expression turned curious. “If you don’t mind, may I ask a personal question?”

She already knew what he wanted to ask, so she immediately rejected him after he finished speaking. “I do mind.”

Hearing that, he could not help but chuckle. “Well, what I wanted to ask is whether you have remarried or are still single.”

Speechless, Victoria looked at him helplessly. “I refuse to answer this question.”

“Alright, fair enough. I just can’t resist a little gossip since nobody else is around to chat with.”

Indeed, no one was coming to work. She glanced at the time and noticed it was almost time to pick up her children from school. She turned to Henry and said, "If you don't have any pressing tasks today, you can leave early."

"Okay, then I'll take off early today. I won't be considered leaving too early, right?"

"What do you think?"

The two talked and laughed as they left the company.

Afterward, Victoria headed to school by car to pick up her children. As she arrived, the teacher immediately approached her and said, "Miss Selwyn, are you here to pick up Nicole and Nathan again? Their dad has already collected them. Was there a miscommunication?"

At the mention of 'dad' today, she was no longer nervous as she could already guess. It was Bane. "I was busy with work and forgot to answer the phone," she casually explained and left.

As Victoria returned home, she was greeted by the sight of Bane sitting on the couch in the living room, helping the kids with their homework. Seeing this scene, she pondered what Summer had made her consider and the unsettling possibility of Alaric attempting to separate her from her children.

If... If I were to be with Bane... If Alaric discovered the children's existence, would he merely perceive them as mine and Bane's without suspecting his relationship with them? But if I were to do that, wouldn't it be incredibly unfair to Bane? He genuinely cares for me, yet I'm entertaining thoughts of using him here. However, I would need a man if I intended to conceal the truth. So, it would be the same no matter whom I used. Should I follow the principle of proximity?

No.

Victoria pushed aside those unrealistic thoughts in her mind and bit her lip.

Chapter 236 Shameless

Five years ago, when she decided to bring these children into the world, she resolved to raise them independently, no matter the circumstances. What was she thinking by having such thoughts now?

Besides, Bane had been exceptionally kind to her. She could not repay kindness with enmity. In the worst-case scenario, she could consider starting a new company in a different city.

Despite the challenges of starting anew, she had just laid the foundation for her current company. Surely, if she relocated to a different city, Alaric would not pursue her there, would he? He would not stoop so low for the sake of the people around him, right?

Chapter 237

Bane was a sensible person. He had only stayed for one night yesterday and had not mentioned staying any longer tonight. Before leaving, he told Victoria, "I'll bring breakfast tomorrow morning and come to pick you up."

She paused for a moment and nodded. "Okay."

Seeing that she no longer rejected him, he reached out and ruffled her hair. "Finally, no more rejections. That's a good sign for me. Keep it up."

Victoria looked at Bane but hesitated to speak.

"Don't overthink it." He seemed to have seen through her thoughts and addressed them directly. "Actually, I never had the chance to tell you when we were abroad. And now, despite the timing not being ideal, I believe this is an opportunity to express myself. Victoria, I want you to know I'll be a good father if you choose me. I'll treat Nicole and Nathan as my own, and I can assure you that we won't have any more children besides them."

She was taken aback by his heartfelt words, especially because she had been contemplating these very thoughts earlier in the day, and he happened to say them. After a brief contemplation, she replied, "This isn't right. It wouldn't be fair to you."

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Chapter 237 A Glance is a Response

"Fair?" Bane chuckled softly. "Victoria, fairness is a rare concept in relationships. Everyone has different desires and expectations. I don't need to compare myself to others. As long as you're willing to give me a second glance, that's a response." She did not respond.

"Even if you're using me, it doesn't matter. What matters is that you're by my side."

In the end, she felt a slight bitterness in her throat and bit her lower lip. "Why do you have to do this?"

Seeing her expression, Bane touched the tip of her nose. "I don't mean to upset you by saying these. My intention is for you to consider me more seriously. After all, Nicole and Nathan have reached an age where they can comprehend things. I also wish to shield them and spare them from any school gossip or rumors."

"How... How did you know about this?"

At the mention of this matter, the smile at the corner of his lips faded slightly. "On the day I went to pick them up, I happened to overhear a few kids gossiping nearby." I didn't expect him to encounter it too. It must've been serious.

277

Chapter 237 A Glance is a Response

Victoria's lower lip trembled as she contemplated the challenges she endured while being raised in a single-parent family. She knew all too well the challenges it brought. Now, she questioned whether she would allow her children to endure the same difficulties.

"But you don't have to worry too much. I'll go and pick up the kids whenever I have the chance. Even if you don't accept me, I believe they won't be subject to gossip anymore."

She remained silent for a while before saying reluctantly, "Thank you. I'll carefully consider everything you've said."

As Bane heard this, a hint of joy flashed in his eyes. "Good."

Has she finally taken a significant step forward? In the past, she had been particularly evasive with me. Today is the first time she has sincerely expressed her willingness to consider it. In other words, she genuinely cares about my pursuit of her.

He knew many things would be beyond his control once he returned to Jasea. Nonetheless, if he could expedite Victoria's emotional bond with the children and alleviate her anxieties, ultimately guiding her to rely on him, it would bring him great satisfaction.

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13:53

Tue, 27

Chapter 237 A Glance Is a Response

After seeing him off, she returned to the living room and fell into deep contemplation.

3

477

While lost in her thoughts, the children approached her. "Mommy, we looked at the phone today and learned everyone misses us. Can we start live streaming this week?"

She had nearly forgotten about the live streaming. It was put on hold when they were preparing to return to Jasea. Due to various factors, they had not announced a resumption date for the live stream. Meanwhile, she had been preoccupied with other matters and had not given them much attention.

With the children mentioning it, Victoria finally took out her phone to check the comments. To her surprise, the latest video she had posted on TikTok had a****d

tens of thousands of comments over more than half a month.

Among these comments, the most common question was about the resumption date of the live stream. Interestingly, one particular comment expressing a strong desire to see her children received the highest number of likes.

She pondered for a moment. "Considering your current schoolwork, we can consider resuming the live streaming. However, we'll need to reduce the frequency and shift our focus to participating in more outdoor activities in the future."

13:53 Tue, 27 Jun

Chapter 237 A Glance Is a Response

Hearing this, Nicole shook her little head. "Mommy, you can film videos while doing outdoor activities."

That suggestion sounded appealing to her, as she had planned to spend quality time with her children. Therefore, it would be a good idea to do so. "Okay. Since both are on board with the idea, let's do it that way."

you

Around 9.00PM, Alaric's phone buzzed with a notification. After a shower, he picked up his phone and noticed that the only TikTok account he followed had uploaded a new video.

New upload from the kids? He clicked on the video and saw the scene of the two children sitting side by side at the desk, wearing identical outfits.

The video was silent and captured the scene of the two studying without any commentary from the cameraman. Amid the video, Nicole-the little girl sitting in the corner-suddenly turned her head toward the camera. "Mommy, I can't find my textbook."

In the next moment, the camera angle shifted, and the little girl had already found her textbook and was studying diligently.

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13:53 Tue, 27 Jun

Chapter 237 A Glance Is a Response

Alaric's gaze flickered. Seems like a part in the middle has been edited out.

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However, he did not dwell on this minor incident as he had no interest in pursuing a married woman with two children.

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He was solely curious about the parenting style and discipline that shaped these well-behaved children. Moreover, he could not help but wonder about the couple's appearance. However, his curiosity did not extend beyond that.

The video was accompanied by a caption.

'I've been occupied with preparations for our return to my home country, including moving, job hunting, and searching for schools for the children. Things have recently settled down, and we'll soon resume live streaming. However, the streaming schedule is uncertain. Thank you all for your support and understanding. We wish you all a happy life!'

The streaming schedule is uncertain? Looks like they had a lot to deal with after returning to their home country.

As it was a video, Alaric could not send any tips and could only watch it repeatedly several times. However, even after he watched the video numerous times and set

aside his phone to prepare for rest, Victoria's heartless expression at Villower Group during the day involuntarily flashed in his mind.

13:53 Tue, 27 Jul

Chapter 237 A Glance Is a Response

77

Her cold words pierced his heart like needles, word by word. As my childhood friend, she knows exactly where my pain lies and doesn't hesitate to strike where it hurts. Even with his eyes closed, the words she spoke continued to echo in his ears, repeating relentlessly. In the end, he grew frustrated and resorted to replaying the kids' old videos on his phone.

Initially, it did not have much impact, but as he continued listening until the end, the voices in his mind gradually gave way to the kids' soft and adorable voices.

Eventually, he drifted off to sleep. Chapter 238

The following day, Alaric received Norwood's call after waking up. "Terrance called and told me you hadn't eaten since last night."

Since Alaric had only slept for a few hours, he was not in a good mood, and the cruel words Victoria said to him yesterday rendered his mood even worse. "What do you want?"

Norwood clucked his tongue. "We're friends. Can't I call to check up on you?"

"No, thank you." After that, Alaric was ready to hang up.

"Wait." Norwood, who sensed Alaric's intention, quickly stopped him. "I have something to tell you."

Alaric still had a little patience when it came to his friend. "Speak."

"Did you upset Claudia again?"

There was a trace of mockery in Alaric's eyes when he heard that. "What's the matter? Did she rant to you?"

"No, not me. It's West. He's heartbroken for her and made me talk to you."

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73 54 Tue, 27 Jun

Chapter 238 Serious Considerations

After a moment's silence, Alaric threatened, "Norwood, if you're too bored and need something to do-"

"Stop. Stop." Norwood quickly cut him off. "I'm never bored, so don't make me do anything. I called to ask about your thoughts." He paused before continuing, "Also, don't you think you've been staying in Jasea for too long? Is it because of work, or..."

Alaric initially did not want to tell him anything, but remembering Victoria's attitude yesterday, he was silent for a long time before confessing, "She's back."

Norwood reflexively asked, "Who?" With the lack of response, his tone was laced with shock. "Don't tell me..."

He dared not utter her name because he was afraid to poke his sore spot. However, Alaric's silence confirmed Norwood's assumption that she had returned. The two did not hang up and stayed silent just like that.

In the end, Norwood piped up, "What's next? What are you going to do?"

What should I do? Alaric lowered his gaze and answered, "I don't know."

Silent, Norwood became anxious. "It's been five years. Haven't you figured that out? How can you not know what you want?"

2/7

13:54 Tue, 27 Jun

Chapter 238 Serious Considerations

Hearing that, Alaric leaned back and closed his eyes. How could he not know what he wanted? He knew very well... For five years, his mind and body missed her every moment of the day and night.

"But I have to remind you. It's been five years. Since she was so determined to leave you back then, chances are she might've already married someone and had children."

"Shut up."

"I know you can't stand listening to that, but can you deem it impossible? It's been five years, not five months."

After listening to that, Alaric gnashed his teeth. "Haven't I also waited five. her?"

years

for

"You did, but she isn't obligated to reciprocate that. Don't forget. You've previously waited for another woman."

wwwwwwww

That rebuke rendered Alaric speechless. When he recalled the day he met Victoria, he noticed she had gotten more beautiful but looked pure yet seductive whenever she wore her hair down. It was not an appearance an ordinary woman would have.

377

Chapter 238 Serious Considerations

Five years was enough to change many things. Perhaps I should hire someone to get a gist of her life.

Yet, Norwood soon interrupted his thoughts. "Are you thinking of hiring someone to investigate whether she's married? I'd suggest you not do so. You hurt her five ago. Are you gonna do it again now?"

years

Alaric fell silent after that. "So, what do you think I should do?"

Despite knowing each other for many years, this was the first time Norwood heard a hint of bewilderment in Alaric's voice. He seemed to be sincere in asking for his opinion.

Norwood sighed. "Can't you resort to other methods to learn more about her?"

"I understand."

After the call ended, Alaric fell into deep thought. Other methods? I can give that a try.

Bane drove Victoria to work today, and of course, he brought the children to school on their way. While heading to her company, she looked outside the window,

477

13:54 Tue,

Chapter 238 Serious Considerations

seemingly immersed in her thoughts.

Bane knew what she was thinking about because she had been absent-minded since she returned last night. "What's the matter?" Even so, he turned off the car's radio and showed concern.

As he expected, Victoria did not hear his question and finally returned to her senses

after he asked again. "What? N-Nothing. I was just thinking about company matters."

He replied, "Your company? How is it? I've been swamped lately and haven't gotten the chance to ask you. Do you need my help with anything?"

"No, it's okay." She shook her head. "I can handle it."

"If there's anything you need help with, don't keep it to yourself. By the way, what have you been busy with lately?"

"Not much. I just need to find a company to back me up so that it would be easier to recruit employees." She was not thinking about that, but since Bane asked, she remembered some matters at the company and took the initiative to tell him.

"You need a company to back you up?" She did not expect he would chuckle after 5/7

Chapter 232 Serious Considerations

hearing that. "It's right in front of you."

Immediately, Victoria turned pale and explained, "That's not what I mean. I didn't say all this just to get your company to-

"But what to do?" Bane pushed his glasses and joked, "I returned here and started that company for you. Whom would you find to back you up if not me?"

She tried to reason with him, "But you said-

"I was afraid you might feel pressured after discovering the truth and run away. But now that you're willing to think about our relationship, this can be considered a condition. How about that? Don't you think it's a good idea?"

Victoria said nothing and bit her lower lip. She had always thought Bane was decent, but... he had been insistent with her lately. A long while later, she asked, "Is it because of him?"

He released a long sigh. "He is a part of the reason, but it's also because I don't want to wait anymore. I adore you and the children and want to be with you guys forever.

So, have you come to a decision?"

"..." She looked at him and moved her lips. "You're very kind to me, and if you're 6/7

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13:54 Tue, 27 Jun

Chapter 238 Serious Considerations

willing-

Buzz!

The phone in her pocket suddenly vibrated, cutting off her words, so she stopped talking and took out her phone. Meanwhile, Bane frowned as he had a bad feeling about this.

"Mr. Poole?" Victoria never expected to receive a call from Henry on her way to work. "What's the matter?" She was so focused on the call that she did not notice Bane had relaxed his breathing and was eavesdropping on her conversation.

"What?" The shocked lady pressed on. "Who is it?"

Seconds later, she fell into silence again, followed by her gloomy mood. It took her a while before saying, "I understand. I'm on my way."

After hanging up, she leaned against the car seat and said nothing.

Bane pursed his lips. "What happened?"

"Mr. Poole just called and told me someone invested in my company. Chapter 239

A faint glint flashed across Bane's eyes as he asked, "Is that so?" He tried to hold

back his emotions and put on a smile. "Which discerning company president discovered your potential?"

Victoria shot him a complicated look, making him even more uncomfortable.

"What happened?"

"It's him. He's the investor."

Even a usually calm person like Bane had suddenly slammed on the brake and stopped on the side of the road. The incident startled Victoria, who then turned to look at him. Fortunately, the road was empty, or their sudden braking would cause a car accident.

Once he stopped the car, he took a deep breath and quickly returned to his calm state. "Is that so?"

She thought he looked a bit off and nodded. "Yes, but are you okay? Why don't I take the wheel from here?"

"It's fine, Victoria." Bane turned on the engine again and explained, "I overreacted a

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Chapter 239 Investment

little just now. Did I scare you? I didn't think he would do such a thing."

"No, you didn't, but just... don't step on the brake like this again. We're lucky there were no cars behind us, or we might've gotten into a dangerous accident."

"Okay. I was wrong. I'll keep that in mind." He readily admitted his mistake and apologized.

n!!!

Victoria felt relieved as this was one good trait about Bane. He was not self-centered and was willing to admit his mistakes, giving her leeway in everything. If Alaric had been in this incident, he would have scoffed and retorted, "What's the matter? Think I'd get you into an accident? Don't fret. Even if we had to die, I would die before you."

Though they had separated for five years, she could still easily remember his expressions and tones in such situations. She shook her head to get those messy thoughts out. Then, she quickly exited the car upon arrival at the company. "Thank you for the ride. Be careful on your way to work."

Following that, she turned around and left. She had not gone further than a few steps when she heard someone opening and closing the car door. When she turned around, she saw Bane approaching her. "Come on. I'll walk you to your office."

207

Chapter 239 Investment

She tried to reason with him, "But-"

"Is there something wrong with that? I've never stepped foot in your company since you started it. Am I unwelcomed to get a tour?"

"Of course not." She tugged her lips. "Let's go."

The two entered the elevator together.

"What were you saying before you received the phone call?" When Bane's voice sounded inside the quiet elevator, Victoria felt her nerves tense.

Yeah... What was I going to say? "I forgot. Why don't we discuss this later?"

3/7

Just as the last words escaped her lips, the elevator doors opened. Since her focus lay on the investment, she did not give it much thought and exited the elevator after

the doors opened.

He stood inside the elevator as a shadow flashed across his spectacled eyes. If his memory served him right, her words were, "If you're willing..."

What could be next? Perhaps it might be something he wanted to hear but was interrupted by the phone call.

13.54 Tue,

Chapter 239 Investment

It was not until the elevator doors were about to close that he slowly emerged.

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After opening the door to her office, Victoria saw a spectacled man sitting before Henry. The suit-clad man had a neatly tied-up tie and a briefcase beside him. He was holding a stack of documents while discussing something with Henry.

When they heard movement from the door, they looked in that direction in unison, after which Henry rose to his feet and nodded at her. "Miss Selwyn, this is Mr. Levane, the representative from Cadogan Group."

In the meantime, Terrance shot to his feet when he saw Victoria's face and stared at her in bewilderment. Before coming here, he was confused about why Alaric would make such a strange investment out of nowhere, so much so that he even called Peter to ask him about this. However, Peter told him not to ask questions and do whatever he was told because he would soon find out the answers to his questions. Peter was right. The answer had appeared.

All of Terrance's doubts were instantly solved upon seeing Victoria's face. I was wondering why Mr. Cadogan would suddenly invest in a small company. Turns out the answer is here.

Chapter 239 Investment

Now that they had an investor, Henry was clearly in a better mood as he came forward to greet Victoria. "Miss Selwyn, I-"

Just as he was about to speak, he saw a handsome man with gold-rimmed glasses and a gentle temperament entering the door. Then, the words he was about to say immediately vanished.

The gentle-looking man had a strong aura. Once inside, he swept his gaze across the entire room before looking at Henry and fixing his inquisitive and probing gaze on Terrance.

Having worked at the management level for many years, Henry immediately noticed Bane had a superior's temperament. Adding on to the fact that he came in after Victoria, he instantly guessed the two had some sort of relationship, so he sensibly decided to shut up.

"Hello." Victoria approached Terrance to shake his hand.

He nervously and stiffly reached out to shake her hand while nodding like a woodpecker, muttering, "H-Hello."

After getting a closer look, he was astonished by how beautiful Victoria was and now knew why Peter was exaggerating with his words when describing Alaric's

5/7

13 54 Tue, 27 Jun

Chapter 239 Investment

ex-wife. Back then, he was even skeptical about Peter's choice of words but threw his skepticism out the window after looking at a photo of her.

Now that he saw her in the flesh, he thought the photo only showed ten percent of her actual beauty. She's so beautiful, he thought while apprehensively withdrawing his hand.

She smiled and asked, "Excuse me, but where is Mr. Cadogan?"

"M-Mr. Cadogan? He's not here today."

That was something Terrance found strange as well. Why did Alaric ask him to come here instead of visiting himself? He was helping her, yet he did not want to appear before her.

After thinking about it, she decided to use a more straightforward approach. "Where is he now?" She would go and look for him.

"Y-You're looking for Mr. Cadogan?" Once he asked that, he took out his phone and stammered, "I-I'll call him."

Before he could make the call, she stopped him with her snowy-white hand. "There's no need to tell him. He knows who I am, so just tell me where he lives."

6/7

Chapter 219 Investment

When she reached over with her hand, her fingers touched Terrance, causing him, someone with zero love experience, to instantly blush red.

"S-Sure." He then told her the address while stammering, his ears were blushing so red that they were almost the same color as blood, His strange demeanor went unnoticed by Victoria, who was wholly focused on the serious matter,

"Thank you." She looked at the document before the two.

Henry blinked before staring at her and then at Bane, softly admitting. "It's a hard-to-come-by chance, so I've already agreed to it before you arrived."

Tue,

Chapter 240 Alaric Faints Chapter 240

Victoria was rendered speechless because she was not m***y prepared to meet him. After all, Henry had kept bugging her to get investments from Cadogan Group, which was not wrong because he was merely thinking from the company's perspective. The company indeed benefited from having him as the manager.

Therefore, she did not act out and nodded before leaving. Throughout the process, Bane's presence went unnoticed by her until she was about to hail a cab downstairs. He caught up to her and offered, "I'll come with you."

Hearing his voice, she halted abruptly and finally realized something after she saw him with his car keys. "I'm sorry. I was in such a hurry to deal with this matter that I accidentally..."

She wanted to say it was not her intention to ignore him, but would that not be more upsetting?

"Are you going to look for him? I'll come with you."

She instinctively stopped him. "I can manage on my own."

Once she said those words, Bane stopped and quietly looked at her. Feeling his

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13 54

Tue, 27

Chapter 240 Alaric Faints

silent gaze on her, Victoria felt immensely guilty and lightly bit her lip. "I'm sorry. I'll explain everything to you once I return, okay?"

He had a feeling that things might change entirely once she returned from this trip. Still, he could not bear to make her feel conflicted. "Victoria," he called her after a while and sighed. "Go ahead. I'll wait for you."

I can only hope the result will not be disappointing.

With the address from Terrance, Victoria soon found the hotel Alaric was staying at -a penthouse suite on the top floor. Standing before the door, she was conflicted about what she would say to him after seeing him. Then, she pressed the doorbell while lost in thought.

217

However, there was no movement for a long time, so she double-checked the room number, wondering if he was inside. When she thought about it, there was a chance he might be out because his assistant told her he lived here but did not guarantee his availability. Gosh. I'd been too ahead of myself.

Just as she pressed the doorbell for the fourth time and was about to give up and leave, the door suddenly opened. Alaric's face was cold, but when he saw the woman of his dream standing outside, it was soon replaced with shock. A while later, he asked, "Why are you here?"

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Det mee mis

ste frowned signin "Whate

Ste Deansed some test wins the nut nimike a star to his rear but he still cut for ten mesting in the company and wondering how she had been cuming truse The eas-ar ste rear seating well-at she marret someone PE NORWOOD SE te want to use primary methods to be more information so Te di TT ever met mutant recreate ending his call with Norwood HE LESST <ow Victora amus burst out laughing that answer. He clearly said 13 54 Tue, 27 Jun

Chapter 240 Alare F**ts

on the day before yesterday that no one would risk offending him by investing in her company, yet he decided to invest in hers and claimed he did not know why She chuckled softly and demanded, "If you're clueless, stay that way and save your acts."

Hearing that, Alaric frowned. "What if I don't? I am investing in your company. What can you do about that?"

She looked at his pale face and slightly sweaty forehead, enunciating, it doesn't matter, and I don't care what you do because you wouldn't lose anything anyway! With that, she was prepared to leave.

The man did not do anything but watch her leave from behind with tightly pursed lips, seeming to have no intention of talking to her. After a couple of steps, she turned around at him upon remembering something.

"How's Grandma?"

The originally downcast eyes glinted with a hint of mockery as he chuckled. 'Oh? You want to visit her?'

"Yes." She nodded. "I want to see her. She regretted her words yesterday because

Phapter 24 Main Faints

Griselda was still her family no matter how she mud /land's relationsby tmp4/2

However, he scoffed. "That won't be niram/

Frowning, Victoria scanned his face, asking, "Why?"

"No reason. Are you done?" He coldly asked her to leave. "Mense leave if yoie ws saying whatever you're here to say"

Yet, he did not expect her to come closer to him instead of leaving. Not if you don't tell me why I can't see Grandma. Did you tell her what I said?"

His breathing became more labored, "Yes, I told her every word you said."

Once she heard that, her frown deepened. At first, she wanted him to tell Griselde she did not mean what she said because they were words of anger. After all, those words would not only disappoint Griselda but also hurt her feelings and harm her health.

It was unlike him not to know that, but he said he told Griselda everything, which did not seem right.

She narrowed her eyes while carefully observing him. "Alaric, are you hiding

Chapter 240 Alaric Faints

something from me?"

His footsteps halted abruptly before he slammed his palm onto the doorframe, causing a loud bang. He looked furious while reprimanding. "You said it yourself. She's no longer family once we divorced."

Victoria was speechless.

"So, are you finished?" Alaric gave her a hostile glance as though he did not want to see her again.

That look upset her so much that she retorted, "Fine. I'm fine with not visiting her anyway." She turned around to leave again.

6/7

What's with that attitude? Does he think he can stop me from visiting her because he

says so? Just because he's her biological grandson? Since he can invest in my company, I can visit Grandma on my own. But... something seems off with him. today. He invested in my company but acted like he wanted nothing to do with me and urged me to leave when I came looking for him. Also, he looked a little pale, and his forehead s sweaty...

At that thought, she immediately stopped walking and returned to Alaric's room.

Since I just left, the door must still be opened. If...

Chapter 240 Alaric Faints

She did not need to think further because she already saw the man had fainted by the doorway. It seemed like he could not even close the door before collapsing.