

## Can't Win Me Back Novel Online Free

### Chapter 281

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Alyssa stated, "You could get plastic surgery or change your name, but you'll never cover up your past no matter how hard you try."

"The clues will show up if we look closer. I choose to keep my silence, not because I am nice. I couldn't be bothered because it's none of my business, that's all."

"If you try me again, don't blame me for airing your dirty laundry."

Liana felt her heart tighten. She was sickened by Alyssa's threat, as though she was sucked dry.

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Alyssa and Jameson were gone when Jasper emerged from the rose garden. After the conversation with Jameson, Jasper stood alone like a statue in the chilly breeze for a while.

The night had fallen. Jasper arranged for Liana to be driven back to the hospital while he returned to Seaview Manor with Xavier.

During the trip, Xavier sweated profusely and apologized furiously to Jasper with a reddened face.

"Mr. Beckett, I'm so sorry! Punish me in any way you want! It's all my fault for not doing my research and failing to recognize Mr. Schmidt from our communications! It's all on me ..."

Xavier started choking back tears. Jasper stirred from his shut-eye and opened his eyes. He ridiculed, "How old are you now? Why did you cry over nothing?"

"This is a big deal ..."

"Jameson Schmidt and his people haven't been in the country for decades. It's not unusual to get nothing on them."

Jasper closed his eyes again and breathed

deeply. "Even if you looked into the Schmidts, nothing would change. He would not work with us. So, call up a couple of similar rose gardens in the nation. We'll find a supplier somehow."

"Got it! I will get to it tomorrow!" Xavier rubbed his eyes and let out a long sigh. "Mr. Schmidt is pretty generous to Ms. Taylor. He handed the massive project to her without much discussion."

"Any businessman in their right mind would have carefully considered a few proposals before making the decision."

Jasper was stung by Xavier's remark. He asked in despair, "Xavier, was I a bad husband to Alyssa? Did I fail?" (2)

Xavier was speechless. He might be an honest man, but he was not dumb. He was presented with a new challenge fresh after the heels of his blunder on the Schmidts. He felt burdened and anxious.

"It's fine. Tell me the truth. I won't hold it

against you." Jasper read his mind.

"Um, Mr. Beckett. You treated ma dam ...fairly well. You provided her with an expensive lifestyle. You even showered her with luxury cars and black cards without complaints."

"Alyssa and I had a sham marriage because of Grandpa's wish. I gave her anything I could afford." Jasper pinched his nose bridge with a troubled expression.

"Technically, Ms. Taylor did not lose out if her plan was to take her fair share from the contract marriage and leave when the three years were up."

Xavier suddenly put on a straight face and continued, "Sadly, she was truly in love with you. She was attentive to you during the three years. She never complained about your cold shoulder and the bullying from your family."

"You were indeed cruel to a woman who saw you as her husband. The money you

threw at Ms. Taylor was more likely a stinging humiliation for a woman who loved you with all her heart."

Upon hearing the phrase "a stinging humiliation," Jasper swallowed hard. His chest became heavy with emotions.

He tried to take a breath and soothe the feeling. But he was almost crushed by the weight of it at the thought of Alyssa's genuine love for him.



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Jameson arranged a molecular gastronomy dinner for Alyssa, the perfect meal for someone who loved a surprise.

The air-flown bluefin tuna was fresh and succulent. The fish and chip amuse-bouche served was crispy on the outside and tender on the inside.

Additionally, the blackfish was extremely fresh and melted in her mouth. In conclusion, every single dish that night was amazing.

After enjoying the good meal, she ordered some alcohol. Drinking helped to liven the air.

Jameson and Alyssa, both knowledgeable, conversed about a wide range of subjects, including literature, music, and video games. He was able to chat about any topic.

What surprised her the most was that they

played the same asymmetrical multiplayer game. Both of them loved playing the role of killer.

Alyssa chatted animatedly on the topic of games. Her face was flushed as she gestured wildly in growing excitement.

He merely offered simple replies with a dotting smile, allowing her to babble on.

After he wined and dined her, they exited the restaurant. Although it was a pleasant dinner, he did not mention the business partnership as he casually chatted with her.

She felt a little embarrassed for being carried away. She decided to bring it up before bidding farewell.

Jameson seemed to have read her thoughts and said, "Ms. Taylor, send me the proposal about the rose garden partnership anytime when it's ready. We'll walk through the SOP and sign the deal officially."

"Jameson." After a pause, she said flatly, "I assume you chose me over the Beckett Group because you wanted to hit back at Jasper Beckett on my behalf."

He smiled softly at her, neither admitting nor denying her claim.

"Running a business is no child's play. We need to put profits and self-interest before everything. I hope you take this deal seriously. You shouldn't pick your business partner based on personal feelings.

"I might have had bad blood with Jasper, but I will not bully him for no good reason. Since he's interested in striking a deal on the rose garden, I think you should consider both proposals and pick the winning side fairly."

Alyssa had been thinking hard since leaving the rose garden. After some consideration, she decided that it was inappropriate for her to seal the deal with

Jameson.

All would be fair and square if the Beckett Group lost out to her because of its shortcomings. However, she felt uneasy winning the deal from her personal connection with Jameson. She felt as though she was taking advantage of men to achieve her goals.

Jameson looked into her eyes and nodded. "Makes sense. I'd still pick you even if he shows me his proposal, though."

She was dumbfounded at his response. Her long-winded persuasion from before did not seem to have made any difference.

"Ms. Taylor, I understand what you're regretting at." Smiling, he opined softly, "However, everyone has a signature working style. I personally prefer to work with people I'm familiar with. I would not pick Jasper Beckett because I'm not close to him.

"But we have known each other for a long time. Meeting up with you felt just like yesterday. That's why I picked you."

Blinking, she turned away from him awkwardly. There was nothing wrong with his words, but somehow, it embarrassed her like a heartfelt romantic confession.

"Fine. Since you have faith in me, I will not disappoint you. I'll turn in the proposal a little late because I'll be busy with the hotel business. I ask for your understanding." Alyssa put behind her concerns and treated Jameson respectfully as a business partner.

"It doesn't matter. I'll wait, no matter how much time it takes." He opened the car door for her. "It's chilly at night. Get home soon."

She waved him goodbye and entered the car. He bent over, head tilted, staring at her through the window.

"Ms. Taylor."

"Anything else?" She blinked.

"Aren't you curious about the private conversation between me and Mr. Beckett at the rose garden?"

He had been waiting for Alyssa to bring up the question throughout the dinner, but she did not ask him anything up to that point. He admired her patience.

"I'm not interested." She chuckled in an easygoing and open manner. Her dimples were showing. "There's nothing between him and me anymore. Anything he said is none of my business. Goodbye, Jameson."



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Alyssa's Bugatti disappeared into the night. Jameson nudged his glasses with an uncontrollable smile. His heart fluttered with burning passion.

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The La Voiture Noire sped on the flyover. Alyssa rolled down the window to enjoy the night breeze. She fell into deep thought while staring at the cityscape across the river.

"Ms. Alyssa, have you warmed up to Mr. Schmidt? That was fast." Clutching the steering wheel, Sean asked in a stuffy manner.

"I guess so. We had a lot to talk about."

"He might have saved you before, but he had also stalked you to our neighborhood. You should be careful around him," Sean grumbled.

"Maybe he did so because he recognized me and was curious to know more. I think he's a decent fellow after two meetings with him. Sometimes, he does sound a little funny, though. Is it because Kontina is more liberal than us?"

Her eyes sparkled, and she added, "Most importantly, he is playing the same game as me! He's my soulmate! We even made a pact to crush the newbies someday!"

Sean felt increasingly bitter upon hearing that. Pursing his lips, he wallowed in disappointment before asking, "You've never been this patient with men. Do you ...have a crush on him?"

"What makes you think so? Is there something wrong with your head?" She rolled her eyes at him, looking speechless. "If anything, he should be the one to crush on me. Why would I fall for a man? I don't have the time for that. Dating is an obstacle to money-making!"

Cheered by her remarks, Sean chortled. Thankfully, Alyssa remained level-headed after meeting with Jameson Schmidt.

When the car slowed down in a low-speed zone, a card fell out from the flower basket.

"Hm?" Alyssa picked up the card with a frown. She opened the card to find a neat handwritten note from Jameson. He wrote, "Oh, to be young and in love!"

She narrowed her eyes. Jameson Schmidt was quite a character, indeed.

"It looks like you ran into your nemesis again today. Did Liana say anything mean to you today?" Sean was concerned and bridled at the thought of the bitchy woman.

"What do you think?" She lifted a brow. "It's hard to change out of her old ways."

"She's made a move on you. That bitch is digging her own grave." Eyes darkening,

he questioned, "How will you deal with her?"

"Sean, you don't have to follow me around for now. I need your help on something else."

"Go ahead."

"Keep a tab on Liana Gardner's mother, Rosaline Kirkman." She caressed the roses in the basket with an unempathetic look. "Liana will put her plan in action tonight because she can't sit on it."

"Did you say anything to her tonight?" Sean frowned in confusion.

"I brought up her history in Mosgravia and scared her witless." Alyssa almost laughed out loud at the thought of Liana's petrified expression.

"Oh! Wouldn't she keep her guard up after you spoke to her?" Sean asked worriedly.

Smiling, she wagged her finger. "No, I didn't do it to alert her. I was luring her. I

provoked her with my words today to heighten her anxiety when her engagement nears. She'll fumble. She's dead set on marrying Jasper Beckett and will do anything to remove the obstacles in her path."

Sean gasped when realization dawned on him. "Does that mean she'll find and hide her child?"

Alyssa nodded with a sly look. "She will likely get Rosaline to help her out because it will be hard to move about when she is being hospitalized at the moment.

"Only Rosaline would know the whereabouts of the child under foster care. I've set the bait. Now, we will wait for them to bite."



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Liana was terrified and lost when she got back to the hospital. Alyssa's threatening words echoed in her ears. She bit her nails anxiously and paced her room.

"No, I can't let this go on! She's the daughter of the Taylor Family, not to mention that she's a snake. Now that she has learned about my history of studying in Mosgravia, she'll only dig deeper!"

Liana couldn't sit back anymore. She needed to handle the matter proactively. Trembling, she dialed Curtis' number. 1

It took him a while to pick up. "What's up? It's late..."

"Curtis! Alyssa Taylor is looking into me. She might find out about our relationship soon." Gaze smoldering, she felt her throat catch fire. "You must leave Solana City as soon as possible."

"Pfft ... Is this a trick to ditch me? I will not stop until I get my money."



"If Alyssa learns about us, my marriage to Jasper will go down the drain! You won't even get five cents, not to mention five million!" she growled.

"Fine. Fine. I'll trust you this once, but you'd better not pull anything on me. If not ..."

"I promise to give you every cent. Let's cut contact for now to avoid any troubles." She hung up promptly. Yet, she couldn't stop her hand from shaking.

She pulled herself together and made a call to Rosaline. "Mom, come to the hospital now. I have something urgent to discuss with you."

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On the other side, Alyssa was holding Curtis' phone. The screen had gone dark.

Curtis had been imprisoned in a dark

underground space that was heavily guarded. Escape was almost impossible.

The only thing worth celebrating was that he had successfully moved into a seated position from being suspended upside down. It was such a relief that he almost bowed to Alyssa in gratitude. Had he remained hanging from the ceiling, he might have died from a brain hemorrhage.

"Not bad. Your acting has improved." She handed Sean the phone and arched her brow sarcastically.

"Don't mention it. I should be working for you, Ms. Taylor." He looked pale from fear. After all, he had recently lost two tendons in his hand. The last thing he wanted was to be injured in the feet.

"Liana Gardner's birthday will be in a few days." Alyssa sat comfortably in the chair and crossed her slender legs.

She continued, "I need you to work with us and follow your script. If you act well, I

will send you to rehabilitate in prison as a reward. If not, everything's on you—you'll meet your maker."

"U-Understood. I'll only listen to you!"Curtis was drenched in cold sweat and nodded furiously.

Alyssa chuckled."I heard you had one potato a day. Tsk tsk, how could you hold out with that little food? Sean, send the food over."

"Sure."

Soon, Sean laid a food tray in front of Curtis. The tray not only contained four freshly baked potatoes, but it also came with a grilled chicken and a bottle of beer.

After days of surviving on a potato a day, Curtis could eat a horse. He stared keenly at the grilled chicken as his tears and saliva flowed.

"Eat up. This is from Ms. Alyssa." Seanstared at Curtis coldly and placed the tray in front of the starved man like it was dog

food.

Curtis slurped and looked at Alyssa with teary eyes."Ms. Alyssa, why is there so much food? Is this my last meal?"

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After leaving the underground room, the exhausted Alyssa had a good stretch."Let's go home."

"Why did you prepare food for that jerk?"Sean felt pained when he recalled the events from that horrifying night. His eyes were brimming with tears."Should have let that opportunistic and cruel bastard eat his shit."

"I need Curtis'help in defeating LianaGardner."



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Alyssa yawned. "Curtis must have hated Liana and me after all the torture he's been through these days. If I treat him better, he'll feel thankful to me and shift his hate to Liana instead. He'll do anything to make her pay."

"How smart!" Sean praised her with a smirk. "I couldn't wait to watch their fight!"

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After inspecting the hotel's restaurant, Alyssa went back to her office in satisfaction and rewarded herself with a few rounds of games.

Six months had passed since she took over the KS World Hotel. The hotel was running well, and business was good. Not only did the hotel maintain its star rating, but it also received the "Most Popular Hotel of the Year" award.

However, that alone did not suffice for Alyssa. She was aiming for the "Best Hotel of the Year" award that the Beckett Group had won for five consecutive years.

After her appointment at the KS World Hotel, it would be Taylor Group's turn to bag the award.

In the past few days, Alyssa accepted interviews from three popular media outlets in the nation. Her decision came as a surprise to Sean because she had always kept a low profile.

Alyssa had her reason for accepting the interviews. She foresaw that she needed something more than her status as Winston's daughter to win public approval when she was appointed the president of KS Group.

She had to put herself out there. Winston had given her a good opportunity when he appointed her to manage the hotel. She wanted to take the chance and give her

best.

After winning a round of games, she wanted Sean to refill her coffee, only to remember that she had sent him on a mission.

A week went by. Two days before Liana's birthday, Sean was not back yet.

Alyssa smiled and closed her eyes as she rapped her knuckles on the table. She believed that her calculations were right. Therefore, she would wait for his return in patience.

She received a call at that moment. She picked up her phone merrily after seeing that it was from her lovable mentee, Rose Emerson. "Rose, what's up?"

"Madam!" Rose ditched her chic and aloof fashion designer persona in front of Alyssa and showed her sweet side instead. "I made some desserts for you. I have some top-grade flower tea as well. Are you free to drop by? I'd like to pamper you."

"Hah, the draft of Rozabela's new season must be out. Are you trying to rope me into a quality check?" Alyssa immediately saw through Rose.

"Madam, why did you call me out?" Rose grumbled playfully.

"Rose, you do not need my advice at your level. You are now an inspiration for your juniors and a respectable figure in the fashion industry, Alyssa encouraged Rose. "Just follow your guts. I might ruin the charm and individuality of your designs with my advice. Just be confident in yourself, Ms. Emerson!"

"Thank you, madam. I will never forget your help. Without you, I would not be where I am now." Rose remained humble, like when she first started. She would forever hold a place for Sharon.

"Madam, I have something to confess, but I'm worried you might be angry at me." After a pause, Rose gritted her teeth and

confessed, "That Liana Gardner bitch asked me for a dress an hour ago. She was interested in the silver off-shoulder dress in my studio. I can't believe how thick-skinned she is!"

"Did you lend it to her?" Alyssa casually questioned.

"Yeah. That's why I called you to apologize..." Rose's voice trailed off.

"I know you very well because you're just like me. You have a good reason behind every move you make." Alyssa did not want to blame her.

"The dress she borrowed might be haute couture, but it is an outdated style from last year. The measurements did not suit her, but she insisted on wearing it."

Rose scoffed. "I told her that every piece of my work is one of a kind. If she alters my dress, even if it's putting a pin, I will make her pay five times the price!"

"Is she fine with a dress that's not

tailored to her measurements?" Alyssa casually wondered aloud with a grin.

"That's not my concern. If there's any mishap, she's the one who has to bear the shame. Am I right, madam?"



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Liana exerted herself for her birthday party. She was no longer her previous sickly self and mustered all her energy to plan the event.

She called up event venues and made arrangements for the dress and makeup. One would have thought she was getting ready for an engagement party.

Jasper was not involved in the preparation in any way. Knowing that she was doing much better, he stopped visiting her at the hospital.

Liana was obviously upset at his indifference. Still, the birthday party remained her top priority at the moment.

The night before the birthday party, Liana tried on the evening dress she had borrowed from Rose after much persuasion.

She could not keep the dress from slipping down because the dress had a wider bust. The two maids were sweating with worry, but they failed to keep the dress in place.

"Clumsy losers! Why did we even keep you around the house?" Liana gave the maids a shove in the heat of the moment. Her face was flushed.

"Why don't we ... get a tailor to alter the dress? We can also use a few pins to keep the dress in place," one of the maids suggested tentatively.

Liana started sweating from the irritation. She refused to admit that she was worried about the compensation.

She had signed an agreement to borrow the dress, which was worth six figures. If the dress got dirtied, torn, or altered in any way, she would have to pay Rose five times the price of the dress.

Putting aside the astronomical amount, she was reluctant to give Rose Emerson a

single cent because that woman was cozy with Alyssa.

"Get me some tape right now!"

Soon, the maids hurried back with tape. They plastered the tape in the inner bust area before putting the dress on Liana. The dress was finally secured.

"Ms. Gardner, you're clever! This is a handy trick!" The maids praised her to the skies. She let out a long sigh with a smug look.

Right then, they were interrupted by a knock on the door. Rosaline showed up in a great hurry with a tense expression.

"Mom!" Liana's heart almost stopped at the sight. She quickly ordered the maids, "Get going now."

After the maids scurried out of the room, Rosaline swiftly locked the door from within.

"Mom, how did it go?" Liana went up to

Rosaline urgently, holding the hem of her dress.

"It's settled." Rosaline clasped her daughter's hand in her palms.

"You've been through a lot of trouble." Liana grabbed Rosaline's hands tightly with a serious look. "I will never forget your huge favor. I will pay you back sometime."

"Sweet child, what are you talking about? You're my flesh and blood. Of course I will side with you!" Looking pale but unrelenting, Rosaline replied, "Now that you are back together with Jasper and received Javier's support, you are a step away from marriage."

"You can't give up at this point. I will not allow anyone or anything to stand in the way of your marriage with Jasper Beckett!"

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The next day, Liana's long-awaited birthday party kicked off as the night fell.

The Gardners hosted the guests at the largest ballroom in Berenike Hotel to show off their close relationship with the Becketts.

On top of that, Sophia had invited VIPs from Solana City and across the nation to attend the party on behalf of Javier. She poured so much effort into the birthday party as though it was her second wedding.

Meanwhile, the opulent ballroom was filled with melodious music and the rustles of the luxurious outfits of the guests. The wealthy VIPs in Solana City had attended the event for Javier.

Although Sophia had been called in for an investigation by the prosecution, she was proven innocent after Henry Kirkman was revealed to be the culprit.

As a result, she sprang back to life and dressed up to attend the event hand-in-hand with Javier, chatting merrily with the guests as though nothing had happened.

"Mr. Javier, Madam Sophia, congratulations to you!"

"It's my niece's birthday. You should congratulate her." Sophia was decked in jewelry and appeared to be in a good mood.

"Ms. Gardner is Mr. Beckett's fiancée, isn't she? I believe we'll hear some good news from them pretty soon. That's why I am congratulating you on the new addition to the Beckett family!" "Hahaha! Thank you!"



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Betty was chatting with a few acquaintances at Liana's birthday party.

"Congratulations, Betty. You'll have a newsister-in-law soon," Mabel remarked with a smile.

"More accurately, she'll have a new sister-in-law 'again,'" Jessica joked. "Anyway, new is always better. I heard Ms. Gardner is the niece of Madam Sophia. You'll be one big family soon. I bet you all will get along brilliantly."

Betty faked a smile.

"Get along? What a joke!" Betty scoffed inwardly.

"I was told that Ms. Gardner and Mr.

Beckett are childhood sweethearts who have gone through a lot. I believe she's his true love because he's marrying her right after his divorce.

"Your brother's really lucky in love. What about you? When will you get yourself a boyfriend and get hitched?"

Hearing that, Betty scanned the venue passionately in an attempt to locate Landon.

Landon was in the presidential suite with Jasper. Looking smart in their suits, they sat in front of the gigantic glazed double doors overlooking the night view of Solana City.

Landon chose a couture suit for the night, matching a white shirt with black pants. He wore a black leather choker with a golden rose charm on his slender neck, looking regal and sexy at the same time.



On the other hand, Jasper was dressed in an all-black ensemble. He matched his black shirt with a black tie, just like the usual. The gold dragon lapel pin was the highlight of his outfit, a symbol of his

great taste and the superiority of a leader.

"Good heavens." Landon couldn't hold back from commenting on Jasper's outfit. "Look at your outfit. People might think you are attending a funeral."

Frowning, Jasper joked, "You're not any better in that white shirt."

"I realized that God is indeed fair. He blessed you with good looks but cursed you with a mean mouth. It's hard to be perfect."

During the banter, Landon fixed his gaze on Jasper's lapel pin. "Hm? This looks exquisite. Can I borrow it later?"

Jasper's eyes wavered before he turned down the request with a grim face. "No way."

"Aw. We used to wear each other's boxers. Why are you upset over a lapel pin now? You're more selfish when you're older!"

Xavier showed up at that moment. "Mr.

Beckett, someone was sent by Ms. Gardner to remind us that the speech is about to start. She wants you at the ballroom to join her for the speech."

"I'm not going." Jasper wore a deadpan look in his eyes as he coldly turned down the request.

"Okay!! I'll relay the message!" Xavier's brows were wiggling from the excitement. Oddly, he derived a lot of satisfaction from Jasper's rejection of Liana.

"Um, she's recently gone through a relapse and cut her wrists. Why would you trigger her after she's recovered? She might splatter blood all over you." Landon narrowed his eyes and mocked Jasper.

"I cannot share the stage with her tonight." Jasper's tone was unfeeling.

"Why? You are her boyfriend."

"I've decided to break up with her."

Landon appeared dumbstruck by the

sudden news. Similarly, Xavier was close to screaming in shock after hearing the update.

"I have not told her out of consideration for her condition." Jasper stared at the ground and said in determination, "I'll tell her when her condition has stabilized to minimize the shock. After all, she was my savior."

Blinking, Landon seemed to have noticed something huge. He inched closer. His face loomed in front of Jasper's eyes.

"Spit it out. Are you breaking up with Liana partly because you have fallen for Alyssa? Yes or no?"

Jasper felt a sharp and suffocating pain in his chest. Finally, he squeezed out a reply, "No."



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While Liana was enjoying the spotlight at Berenike Hotel, Alyssa was driving her sports car up a winding mountain road and enjoying the night breeze.

She sang to the tune of "Burning Revenge" that was playing in the car, seemingly in a good mood. Silas called her at that moment. She picked up and cooed, "Silas!"

"Aw, I'm melting! I should have recorded you and sent it to Axel. He's going to burn in jealousy!" Silas sounded excited. It didn't take much to make a man happy.

"Did you call me because you have everything arranged?" asked Alyssa.

"Yes, it's done. Jonah has made his arrangements too."

She replied sweetly, "I trust you and Jonah. By the way, I'm on my way to visit Newton Beckett. I heard that he's the only

one in the family who isn't at Liana's birthday party—Sophia has dragged everyone else there.

"I know he enjoys company and can't stand loneliness, but he never tells anyone because he doesn't want to burden them. I should keep him company because he adores me."

The look in her eyes softened at the mention of Newton. She couldn't help but feel bad for the old man.

When she was married to Jasper, she always kept Newton company from time to time. She spent time chatting, painting, and checking out antiques. She'd sing for him and bring him to stroll by the beach.

She recalled one Valentine's Day when Solana City saw a historic snowfall. She brought some homemade desserts and showed up at Newton's place in the snow.

She vividly remembered the shock on Newton's face when he stared at her cheeks and nose, which were red from the cold.

"Alice, it's Valentine's Day! Why did you come to me instead of spending time with Jasper?"

She cooked up an excuse for Jasper while forcing a smile. "He doesn't have time to rest because he's the president of the Beckett Group. He doesn't have a day off on Valentine's. Anyway, I'm happy he remembered and prepared a gift for me."

"Young lady, you are too gentle and kind. You need to toughen up to tame a stubborn man like Jasper. I was like him when I was younger. What my wife did was banish me to the couch. It worked like a charm."

Alyssa chuckled at the story.

They took in the winter scenery for a while. He suddenly asked, "Are you afraid of the cold?"

"No!"

"Come with me to visit your grandma, then."

Newton's face was full of affection, something that Alyssa could never expect from Jasper. "I'll clean the snow at her grave. She's afraid of the cold."

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"Grandpa! I'm here!" Alyssa's singsong voice echoed in the living room just like before.

"Alyssa!" She heard a similarly sweet and youthful voice. Next, Lauren emerged with Newton, who was in a wheelchair.

"Lauren? You're here too." Alyssa was overjoyed at the sight of Lauren. She pulled Lauren's thin frame into a tight hug.

Lauren hugged Alyssa as her hand traveled across Alyssa's back. She blinked with her round, lively eyes. "You're thin—you lost some weight. Did you not eat well?"

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"I did. I am stuffed by the end of every meal," Alyssa replied with a smile. She had indeed lost weight due to her stressful workload. Sometimes, she'd have brunch and miss her dinners.

"Alice, come here. Let me take a look!" Newton was grinning ear to ear when he saw Alyssa. He still called her Alice because he was reluctant to make the switch, but Alyssa did not mind.

She had no lingering affection for Jasper anyway. Alice White was a part of the past that she left behind. As long as Newton was happy, he could call her by any name.

"Grandpa, you look pale. Did you not rest well?" She went down on one knee by the wheelchair and looked at him worriedly.



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"Ah, my chronic illness has flared up again. It's not a big deal." Newton comforted Alyssa by caressing her head. His face was a shade of sickly grey.

Her chest tightened at the sight. She held his right hand and checked his pulse. A moment later, she addressed him sternly, "Grandpa, I will visit you weekly to perform acupuncture. I'll give you a new prescription. You shouldn't slack on taking your meds. I'll get Mr. Gorham to keep a tab on you."

"Alice, things are different now. You're Winston's beloved daughter. How could I trouble you?"

"I heard from Jasper that you are running the Taylor Group's hotel business as well. That must be very stressful for you. You don't have to travel back and forth. Mr. Gorham will take care of me." Newton

longed to see Alyssa but worried that the traveling might tire her.

She was surprised that Jasper would discuss her with Newton. Jasper had been neglectful and dismissive in the past, but he started thinking about her after the divorce. How ridiculous!

"I'm Winston's daughter, but I'm your granddaughter too!" Lifting a brow, Alyssa slapped her thigh. "I am free to go anywhere and do anything I want. Winston doesn't have a say in that! Hmph! 11

Newton and Lauren laughed at her adorable antics.

Alyssa's phone was buzzing. She checked her screen and saw a text from Sean. He wrote, "Everything's in order. Waiting for your approval."

The luxurious stage in the ballroom was decorated with fresh flowers. The lights

beyond the stage dimmed as the stage basked in a brilliant spotlight.

Jasper and Landon arrived late at the ballroom. Despite their low-profile entrance, they immediately became the center of attraction.

All eyes were on the two men as the guests gossiped.

"I'm surprised that the haughty and self-important Mr. Beckett showed up at Ms. Gardner's birthday party. She must have some solid connections."

"You are naive to believe that this is just a birthday party. Did you notice that her parents and Jasper Beckett's parents are here? They're using the birthday party as a platform for an important announcement."

"Oh, is that so? I guess I made the right decision to attend. Will there be drama later?"

"Tsk tsk. Didn't they say that comparison

is the thief of joy? As a close friend of the Becketts, I heard that Jasper Beckett didn't even host a proper wedding for his first wife. That poor thing wasted three pitiful years by his side.

"Look at him now. If he's willing to throw a grand birthday party for his girlfriend, we can expect a wedding of the century. I would be so upset if I were his ex-wife!"

The gossip hit Jasper hard, leaving him hurt and damaged on the inside.

Before the divorce, it never occurred to him that he had wronged Alyssa. After the divorce, he found himself under intense scrutiny and faced harsh public judgment as his previous actions were cruelly brought to light.

"Jasper, you alright? Why do you look sick?" Landon frowned and elbowed his friend.

"I'm okay." Jasper took a deep breath to calm himself.

Javier and Liana's parents were seated in the first row, as though they were there for their kids' matrimony. There was a light show going on as joyful music filled the air.

Amid the roaring applause, Liana, dressed in a haute couture off-shoulder silver evening dress and decked in jewelry worth millions, walked in with Sophia by her side. She bowed to the audience.

"Wow! Look! She's wearing a haute couture dress by Rose Emerson!" someone gasped.

"How gorgeous! How did she get her hands on a dress worth millions just for a birthday party? The Becketts must love her so."

Liana was on cloud nine upon hearing the compliments and applause from the audience. The only thing missing was Jasper—he should have been standing by her side. Still, that did not take away the

glamour of the event.

She'd be a majestic princess of the night!

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for taking the time to celebrate my niece, Lia's birthday. Lia will cherish this day forever."

She gently caressed Liana's hand with a gaze so affectionate that she seemed more like Liana's birth mother. "We'd also like to make an important announcement on this occasion."

The audience hushed. Javier's smile was hard to decipher. Meanwhile, Liana's parents stared at the stage with eager eyes.

"Our Lia will soon be officially engaged to Jasper!"



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