

## Departure with a Belly Chapter 14

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Victoria waited until the sun had set but still received nothing from Alaric.

Her phone was silent like it had been cut off from the outside world.

When she was working, she would love nothing more than for her phone to be silent so that she could have more time for herself. But now...

It wasn't until darkness began enveloping the sky that Victoria's phone pinged, startling her.

She hurriedly picked the phone up, only for her gaze to dim upon seeing the content.

It was a text from Summer. 'So? Have you given the idea much thought?

Have you come clean with him?'

Victoria looked silently at her phone for a long time before a

self-deprecating-filled chuckle escaped her.

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You have known the answer long ago, but why are you so insistent? Why

must you lay your wound bare for people to see and scorn? Now, you've done it. How are you going to face him now?

Victoria slid down against the bed and closed her eyes.

Who is he with right now? What is he doing? How did he react when he found out I'm pregnant? Will he share the news with Claudia? What will she think of me after this?

Instantly, Victoria felt as though all the strength in her limbs had been sucked away.

Later that night, Victoria ate no more after taking spoonfuls of soup. When the clock struck nine, her phone still did not have any new notifications.

With that, she could only go downstairs with a jacket wrapped around her.

Hector still hadn't rested yet, so he stood up upon seeing her. "It's already late at night, Mrs. Cadogan. Why are you still up?"

Victoria glanced at the empty gates and asked, "Alaric hasn't come back?"

A hint of surprise flashed across Hector as he answered, "Mr. Cadogan's assistant called earlier saying Mr. Cadogan has something important and won't be coming back tonight."

Victoria's heart sank in response.

“Mrs. Cadogan, are you alright?” asked the butler with worry, seeing that she didn’t look so good.

“I’m good.” She forced a smile after returning to her senses. Then, she turned around to head back upstairs. Just as she was about to enter her room, her phone rang.

The name displayed on the screen caused her pupils to shrink—it was

Didn’t he say he won’t be coming back? Why would he call me at this time, then? What does he want to tell me?

At that, Victoria took a deep breath and prepared herself mentally before answering the call.

“Victoria?”

However, a familiar sweet female voice came on the other end of the line.

It was

Claudia. “Al wants me to tell you that he has something going on and won’t be going back tonight. You’re still sick, so rest early, okay?”

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At that moment, all Victoria felt was that her throat was jammed, her heart was sinking, and even her limbs were numb.

Did he ask Claudia to call me? What is he trying to do?

“Victoria? Are you there?”

Victoria took pains to blurt out an ‘okay’ after coming to her senses but still couldn’t stop herself from ending the call in discomfiture.

When Claudia heard the busy tone, she breathed a sigh of relief, then saved Victoria’s phone number into her phone before returning Alaric’s phone to him.

“Here, Al. I’ve made the call.”

“Alright.” Alaric spared a few seconds from his work to look up and retrieve his phone before asking when a thought came to him. “Has she slept?”

“Not yet.”

At that, Alaric frowned and snorted, mumbling, “She’s so sick, yet she won’t go to bed early. What is that woman thinking?”

Claudia was right next to him when he grumbled. Hearing that, her face blanched at his attitude. She bit her lip while her hands shook slightly.

Perhaps, even he himself didn’t realize how apparently affectionate he looked when he said that.

“Have you saved her phone number?” Alaric asked all of a sudden.

Claudia snapped back into reality and answered, "Yeah, I have. Al, I can ask her to hang out with me, can't I?"

"Sure, that would save her from always burying her head in work."

Claudia could only chuckle awkwardly in response. But when she turned

around, a hint of malice flashed across her usually defenseless face.

The following day, Victoria found her eyes a little puffy when she woke up.

To avoid anyone noticing anything amiss, she deliberately put some ice over her eyes to reduce the puffiness.

Later, she checked her phone and found messages from a couple of people.

'I've already sorted the work out. No need to worry,' texted Noel. 'You have to go to the hospital if you don't feel well.'

'Are you awake yet? How are you doing? I can take you to the hospital if you need.'

The previous text was sent the night before after she had fallen asleep, while the other one was sent this morning.

Then, there was Summer's text. 'Boo, it's been hours, and I still haven't

gotten a reply from you. Is everything okay? I'm sorry. I shouldn't have suggested bad ideas.'

The rest of the few messages expressed her concern for her, and Victoria had a feeling her best friend had trouble sleeping last night.

'I'm fine. Don't worry,' she replied to Summer.

After that, she reopened Noel's chat and expressed her gratitude for taking over her task and wanting to treat him to a meal.

Summer hadn't replied. Noel, on the other hand, replied within seconds.

'How are you doing now?'

Victoria had just wanted to reply to him when his call came directly.

She hesitated for only a couple of seconds before answering it.

"Noel."

"Hey, feeling better?"

"Much better."

"You sound a little nasally. Still unwell, aren't you?"

Victoria fell silent at that. The man had always been sensitive about her well-being.

Silence filled the call for a moment before Noel added, "Did Alaric not take you to the hospital?"

The sudden mention of Alaric stumped Victoria for a moment before she diverted the topic. "It's just a minor issue. I'll be fine after some pills. I'm already feeling much better after resting for two days."

Noel sighed in response. "You're headstrong as usual, Victoria. Your father will be heartbroken if he knows about this."

Victoria pursed her lips. "Not at all. I'll go to the hospital if I'm really feeling ill. Don't worry."

Subsequently, the two chatted a while longer before hanging up.

Coincidentally, just as she ended her call with Noel, Summer called.

"Vic! How did it go? You never replied to my text yesterday. I waited until

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past midnight before falling asleep. If you hadn't texted me, who knows when I'd wake up?"

Who'd have thought my text would wake her up? Should've replied to her later.

"But thank goodness. I can rest assured now after seeing your text."

Summer heaved a sigh of relief before asking with doubt, "You told him about it, didn't you? Alaric, he... How did he react to it?"

Everything was fine before Summer brought him up. Remembering that, Victoria's heart twinged with a dull pain.

At that, she stared at the empty side of the bed.

He hadn't returned the night before.

He chose to hide away after she told him she was pregnant.

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With that, she withdrew her gaze and announced calmly, "Summer, I've decided to drop the baby."