

Departure with a Belly Chapter 161

Departure with a Belly Chapter 161

Chapter 161

It was all it took to silence Claudia at once, and her silence satisfied Elaine.

“What’s the matter, Claudia? Why aren’t you saying anything? Say, what do you think will happen if I mention it to Alaric?”

“Elaine Sutcliffe!” Claudia was instantly worked up. In fact, Elaine could even hear rushing footsteps coming from the other end of the line. “Please don’t act so rashly, okay? We can talk this out.” Claudia tried to appease her, putting a smirk on her face.

I’ve made the right move! She really is scared of Alaric finding this out.

Huh, to think...

“But I’m not acting rashly. I just want Alaric to know the truth, that’s all.

After all, everyone has the right to know it. Don’t you think so?”

“Elaine...” Claudia stopped in her tracks, her tone filled with pain. “Are you hating me for what happened lately? I’m really sorry. I didn’t mean to ignore you. It’s just that my father has forbidden me from being in touch with you anymore, or he’ll confiscate all my pocket money.”

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“So, you really won’t talk to me anymore? Have you forgotten what you told me?” Elaine snorted disdainfully. “You swore you’d repay me when you finally become Mrs. Cadogan. Is this how you’re repaying me now?”

“I’m sorry. I want to repay you, really. But-”

“Alright, repay me, then. I want 300 thousand. Transfer the money to me now.”

“300 thousand?!”

“What’s wrong? Too much?” Elaine taunted while taking a couple of steps forward, scrutinizing the Cadogan Residence’s main gate. “That’s a small figure for you when your family has successfully clung onto the Cadogans,

right?"

"Elaine, calm down and listen to me. This-"

However, Elaine was too agitated to listen to her nonsense. "I want 300 thousand. If you don't transfer it within five minutes, I'll go inside and tell the Cadogans about Victoria's pregnancy!"

With that, she ended the call and stood in front of the gates, feeling incredibly relieved when she saw how afraid and nervous Claudia looked.

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She had thought she would need to plead to Victoria for mercy, but who'd have thought things would take a dramatic turn?!

Claudia sure has provided me with sweet leverage. If possible, I can control her wholly with this!

In the past, she was always the one to flatter Claudia, but even so, she never got much from it.

Beep, beep...

A few minutes later, a large sum of money was transferred to her account, but she frowned in response, for she found that Claudia had only transferred her 150 thousand.

But before she could even contact Claudia, the latter came to her instead. Still, Elaine questioned her as soon as the call connected. "Why is there only 150 thousand?!"

"I'm sorry, Elaine, but that's all I have right now. I'll transfer the remaining money after I ask my family for some money, okay?"

Elaine felt she could accept it if the reason was simply not having enough

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cash on hand. After all, the actual cash socialites like them could control was actually quite limited. Hence, she didn't feel so upset anymore.

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150 thousand can at least alleviate the issue at home. As for the remaining

money... I can continue to hold on to this leverage as long as Alaric remains unaware of Victoria's pregnancy, no?

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Sensing that Elaine had seemingly calmed down a little after receiving the transaction, Claudia coaxed her, "Elaine, are you still in front of the Cadogan Residence? I'll go to you, okay?"

"Sure," Elaine agreed readily. "It's been a while since I last saw you too. I've missed you so much."

Claudia fell silent for a couple of seconds before asking, "Wait for me there, alright? I'm already on my way."

With that, Elaine found a shady spot and sat down.

In no time, Claudia showed up and dashed to Elaine with a wary smile after getting out of the car.

"You didn't go in, did you?" she probed after taking a gander at the Cadogan Chapter 161 Everyone Has the Right to Know the True Residence not far behind Elaine.

Meanwhile, Elaine sized Claudia up. Compared to the latter's exquisite appearance, she thought she looked practically like a hobo lately.

Then, at the thought that Claudia, the very reason she ended up in this state, only came to see her after being threatened, her animosity for the young woman deepened several degrees. "Why, Miss Johnson, are you afraid I did?"

Claudia turned grim at once, but she quickly forced a smile and said, "Please don't be mad at me anymore, Elaine. There wasn't anything I could do."

"Oh, so you had no other choice before this. So how come you can come out now?"

Claudia couldn't help but despise Elaine's triumphant and oppressive demeanor, wishing she could just slap that expression off her face.

However, the latter held the leverage in her hands. After all, everything would be over instantly if Elaine charged into the Cadogan Residence and asked for Alaric or rambled something at the gates.

Thus, Claudia could only swallow the bitterness and force a smile. "Let's

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talk inside the car, okay?"

However, Elaine remained unmoved, standing still and glaring at her.

At that, Claudia swallowed her pride and held Elaine's hand. "I heard your family is going through a tough time lately. How about we talk about it in the car and see if there's anything I can do for you?"

Thinking about her parents and younger brother at home, Elaine reluctantly nodded. "Very well."

After bringing her into the car, Claudia glanced at the Cadogan Residence gates and finally breathed a sigh of relief.

For the past few days, Alaric had been ignoring her.

Despite her multiple attempts to reach out to him, his response has been exclusively 'I'm busy' lately. Eventually, he stopped replying altogether, making it impossible for her to execute her plan to seduce him.

A major problem had seemingly risen between them, and Claudia knew all too well where it stemmed from.

His mood seemed to be worsening, and yet they hadn't divorced yet.

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Claudia's mind even entertained some other speculations-Alaric actually liked Victoria.

The thought sent a chill down her spine.

If he can fall in love with Victoria without knowing that she was the one who saved him instead back then, won't it only be worse if he does know it was actually Victoria?! Not to mention, that woman is now pregnant with his child!

Looks like I have to keep Elaine entertained and make sure this secret doesn't go anywhere. But the pressing question now is when will they finally divorce?!

If she still couldn't do anything about Alaric, then she would have to tackle Victoria.

“Earth to Claudia!” Elaine’s voice snapped her out of her thoughts.

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“If you’re thinking about how to get rid of me or planning to scheme against me, then let me tell you this. I’ve already prepared myself fully regarding Victoria’s pregnancy. Someone will immediately tell Alaric the news if you.

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dare to do anything to me.”

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“No, that’s not it.” Claudia held Elaine’s hand, acting like they were best friends. “How can I possibly do that to you? I’ve been meaning to help after finding out what happened to you, but Alaric has been ignoring me all this while, so I was upset and couldn’t spare the energy to think about anything else.”

Elaine caught the key point at once. “Has Alaric been ignoring you?”

No, that can’t be right! Is Alaric ignoring her? Isn’t she his savior, though?

Out of all the people in the world, he shouldn’t ignore Claudia even if he ignores everyone, no?

“Yes. He hardly pays attention to me now. I’m even beginning to worry that he doesn’t want me anymore.”

Just when I thought I could use Victoria’s pregnancy to control her... Elaine turned grim at once. If Alaric starts ignoring Claudia or abandons her entirely, my leverage will not be of much use anymore. No, this can’t happen! I barely got a hold of this woman and obtained 150 thousand from her!

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“Don’t tell me they’re still married.”

“I don’t know what’s exactly going on between them either,” Claudia said, shaking her head. “I can’t even reach him.”

“Has it never occurred to you to visit his house?” Elaine suddenly suggested. “Now that it has come to this, are you going to wait until Victoria becomes the real Mrs. Cadogan before you start regretting and going to Alaric?”

“I...” Claudia froze. It had crossed her mind to go to Alaric herself, but she was worried it would anger him.

“I’ve tried visiting him at his office, but he doesn’t want to see me now, and he’s also often not there.”

“But he’ll eventually show up, won’t he? If I were you, I’d wait there all day.”

Claudia said nothing in response, and Elaine sneered. “What are you thinking? You’re his savior. No matter what, he won’t do anything to you.” Having heard Elaine’s remarks, Claudia seemed to gain more confidence. Most importantly, things needed to be broken down to be rebuilt.

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Indeed, it had been a long while since she last saw Alaric, so after mulling over it for some time, she gritted her teeth and said, "I get it now, Elaine. I'll go to the company right away. Thank you for reminding me."

Elaine, however, waved her phone in front of her. "Don't mention it. Remember to transfer the remaining 150 thousand to my account. Also, regarding my family's issue..."

You wretched b*tch! Claudia cursed Elaine repeatedly in her head but showed none of it on the surface. Once I become Mrs. Cadogan, several hundreds of thousands will be peanuts!

"Don't worry, Elaine. You'll have your remaining 150 thousand."

It's only a few hundred thousand. Once I've completely captured Alaric's heart, I will personally have you sentenced to jail under extortion! One day, Sutcliffe, one day...

Summer greeted Victoria the moment she returned to the rental. "Well, you're quick."

At that, Summer's eyes widened with incredulity, for she found Victoria

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carrying only a small bag in her hand. "Please don't tell me this is your only luggage."

"This is it." Victoria smiled.

"What about the rest of your stuff? Your clothes, your bags over the years? Don't you want them anymore?!"

"Material possessions serve no purpose in the end, no? Besides, I'm leaving anyway, and most things aren't mine."

Many of them were gifts from Alaric after the two married.

Speaking of which, Alaric enjoyed buying things for her, especially delicate trinkets and small items.

He would always bring her something from his business trips, travels abroad, or anything that caught his fancy in an auction.

Later, they even set up a space in the house that belonged solely to Victoria, which was dedicated to storing whatever Alaric gave her.

Over time, it became filled with items, but she didn't take anything with her this time. She even left the wedding ring in their bedroom.

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She didn't have any money back when her family went bankrupt.

Everything she owned was paid for by Alaric, so it was only natural that she took nothing when she left.

"Come on, don't say that. They still cost money even if they're material possessions!" Summer expressed her regret, giving Victoria a moment of epiphany. "You think so?" she mused. "Looks like I should've taken a couple of valuable things with me. If anything, I can exchange them for money

later.”

“You know what? Forget it.” Summer changed her mind at once. “It’s normal that you’d discard old belongings and start a new life when you’re leaving soon. You... I was just feeling a bit sorry, and here you are, joking with me.”

At that, Victoria shrugged. “You said it yourself-I’m going to start a new life. How can I not be in the mood to joke?”

“Still...” Summer could still remember how her best friend bawled like there was no tomorrow like the day before, so she softened her voice.

“We’re best friends. You don’t have to act tough in front of me. If you want to cry, just do it.”

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Victoria’s smile faded in response. “I’m not as fragile as you think, Summer. Yesterday’s sadness is already in the past. Life goes on, and we need to look forward. Besides, I have a baby to take care of in the future. What time do I have to be mournful?”

Summer wanted to press on, but seeing that Victoria was acting tough for once, she knew she shouldn’t poke at her wounds anymore.

Even if she pretends to be optimistic now, she will eventually be genuinely happy over time, right? Summer mused and smiled in response. “Damn right, Miss Philosopher! I should learn from you.”

With that, the two embraced each other with smiles.

After entering the room, Victoria transferred the old items she had brought into her bag.

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“Are we going to live together from now on?” Summer asked while watching her move the things. Before Victoria could say anything, she continued, “I’ll definitely need to find a bigger place. The neighbors here aren’t noisy, but it’s an old district with no great safety conditions. I checked out a few houses in the new district when you went out this morning, and I thought they looked pretty decent. By then-”

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“Summer.” Victoria stopped whatever she was doing and gazed at Summer.

“Hmm? What’s wrong?”

“I don’t plan on renting a house.”

Her words stunned Summer, and as though something struck the young woman, she hurriedly said, “Don’t worry, Victoria. I know you need money to raise your child, so you don’t have to pay rent. I was planning to save some money and move to a better place anyway. Just consider it as leeching off your bestie.”

“That’s not what I mean. I would love to live with you, but... I’ll probably leave in the next couple of days.”

“Leave?” Summer’s eyelashes trembled. “Where to?”

“Abroad, I think.” Though Victoria still didn’t know where to settle down

just yet, her father was abroad. As such, she certainly had to go to him first.
“Have you forgotten what I promised Claudia?”

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Though she didn't sign the agreement back then, she was also worried there would be unnecessary trouble if she did so. As for the conditions she agreed to, she would try her best to fulfill whatever she promised.

*However, it was obvious Summer didn't share the same sentiment. “Ugh! Don't even get me started on that shameless b*tch! To think she actually used the favor she did for you to make you leave the country. If everyone demands such shameless repayment after helping someone, they might as well not have done anything from the get-go!”*

Compared to Summer's anger, Victoria appeared much calmer. She smiled helplessly and said, “Well, I do owe her, after all.”

Summer still wanted to lash out, but Victoria stopped her. “There, there. I know you feel bad for me, but it is what it is now. Let's be peaceful, okay?” “Fine.” Summer nodded reluctantly, turning woesome quickly at the thought that her best friend would be leaving very soon. “We won't be able to meet often anymore after you leave the country, huh?”

“Well,” Victoria mused. “It's pretty convenient for us to meet whenever and

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wherever since traveling is so convenient nowadays, no?”

“That's true. But... I'm still going to miss you a lot. Even if we can meet, it

won't be as often as it is in the country."

Victoria couldn't help ruffling Summer's head affectionately when she saw how glum the latter looked. But just as she wanted to say something, the doorbell rang.

"Huh, who could it be at this time? No one usually visits me," Summer mused. "Wait here, Victoria. I'll go check it out."

With that, Summer went to answer the door, and Victoria resumed her packing.

While packing, she saw the bright red divorce certificate and fell into silence once again until she heard two sets of footsteps outside, accompanied by a conversation.

"Yeah, I didn't expect you to remember the address after just one visit."

Hearing the sound, Victoria quickly put away the divorce certificate and placed it in the inner compartment of her bag. When she looked up, she

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found Summer jogging back in. "Look, Victoria—it's Mr. Morison."

At the same time, Bane arrived at the doorway of Victoria's room, stopping there politely.

Bane? Victoria put the things in her hands down and approached the man.

Bane ruffled the back of her head upon seeing her and cooed, "I thought I would see a bawling girl. Looks like someone has really grown up."

Summer, on the other hand, pressed her lips together subtly as she

watched their interaction from the side. "I'm going to head out and buy something. You two should talk. I'll come back in a bit."

With that, she headed out the door at once.

Victoria knew her best friend had intentionally created this opportunity for them to chat.

"Care for a drink?" Victoria wanted to pour Bane a drink in the kitchen, but the man stopped her before she could even get up.

"No need to bother." Bane clasped her wrist and brought her back. "I'm here today to ask about your thoughts on the future."

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Victoria lowered her gaze and looked at the hand clasping hers.

Though having known Bane for years, she still felt uncomfortable with this kind of physical contact even though they were separated by clothing.

Fortunately, Bane was discreet. After stopping her, he withdrew his hand in a matter of seconds. His movements and demeanor were natural as if the touch earlier had been unintentional.

Victoria pursed her lips, not wanting to judge him with a suspicious mind.

She no longer went to the kitchen but sat down across from him with drooped eyelids and answered, "I don't have any thoughts."

"No thoughts, or undecided?" Bane tapped the table gently with a hint of a smile in his voice. "You're going to raise your baby on your own, aren't you?"

Having no plan won't help."

At that, Victoria looked up and met the warm, smiling eyes behind his glasses

“How about you help me out in the office?” Bane suggested, and Victoria shook her head without even thinking. “No thanks.”

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“That’s quick. Are you worried I won’t give you a good offer?”

“That’s not it.” Victoria shook her head. “You’re planning to stay and develop long-term in the country, are you not? I’ll likely leave in the next couple of days.”

Bane frowned at once. “Where to?”

“Abroad,” Victoria replied plainly, and Bane clenched his fingers before relaxing them again moments later.

“Just as I suspected. I thought you’d stay.”

“How do you know I’m going abroad?”

“How can I not when your father is abroad?” Bane said with a smile.

“Interestingly enough, I even met Mr. Selwyn before returning to the country.”

This news was undoubtedly a pleasant surprise for Victoria. “You met my father? Why didn’t you tell me before? How is he doing now?”

Bane paused his finger for a second before saying, “He doesn’t want you to worry.”

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“What do you mean?” Victoria turned grave at once. “What happened to my dad? Is something wrong?”

“It’s nothing much,” Bane said softly. “It’s just a minor issue he encountered at work. Your father is competent and will resolve it quickly.”

“Why doesn’t he tell me when he calls?” Victoria’s eyes instantly turned red with anger. “He always tells me everything is going well. Why won’t he tell me anything? I’m his daughter, but he always...”

“Victoria, don’t think of him like that. It’s precisely because Mr. Selwyn loves you that he chooses to hide them from you. If... If you’re really worried about him, why not leave the country with me?”

His words took Victoria aback. “But I thought you were staying and developing in the country.”

“That was the plan.” Bane nodded in affirmation. “But after surveying around, I realize the domestic market is almost saturated. I’ll likely incur losses if I focus solely here.”

Victoria knew about market research before entering a new market. She hadn’t stayed years in the Cadogan Group for nothing.

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“As such, I plan to allocate only a portion of my time in the country, with the

main focus being overseas. Your father's office is coincidentally near mine. Would you like to visit? Perhaps your sudden appearance will give Mr.

Selwyn a pleasant surprise. Who knows?"

However, Victoria stared at him. "Why are you proposing this to me? Aren't you friends with Alaric? You-"

"What do you have in that little head of yours?" Bane tapped her head before she could finish her words. "Aren't you my friend as well? What, do you not want me as a friend anymore now that you've divorced him?"

"It's not like that." Victoria rubbed her forehead in frustration.

"Then stop blabbering and pack your things. My flight's tonight."

"So soon?"

"Yeah, I have a meeting tomorrow. Think about whether you want to join me tonight."

At that, Victoria sat motionlessly for about a minute before finally nodding in acknowledgment. "Alright, I'll go with you."

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Bane pursed his lips in response, and his voice deepened. "Are you certain? Once you leave, it'll be difficult to turn back."

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Difficult to turn back, huh? Victoria smiled barely noticeably, and the dim indoor lighting softened the contours of her face. Strands of dark hair fell over her beautiful eyes, obscuring the expression in her gaze.

Only her slow and gentle voice remained. "I haven't had any way to turn back for a long time, nor have I ever thought about going back."

All of a sudden, the atmosphere seemed to become heavy and melancholic. Bane watched her in silence for a while, then ultimately let out a sigh and ruffled her hair. "Okay, let's not dwell on sad things anymore. They're already in the past, after all."

Victoria sighed as well. "Yeah, it's all in the past now. There's nothing worth pondering over."

After all, mulling over it wouldn't change anything either.

When Summer returned to find out her best friend would be leaving with Bane that very night, she became stupefied at once, and her eyes gradually

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turned red-rimmed. Still, she fought back her tears and forced a smile.

"The flight is tonight? That's fast. Have you packed everything?"

"Yeah, I have everything with me."

"Are you sure you haven't forgotten anything? Let me check." At that, the young woman went straight into the bedroom.

Victoria followed after her, watching her rummage through things only to find nothing.

"I didn't forget anything," Victoria reminded her. "Have you forgotten I only brought a small bag with me from the Cadogan Residence? I didn't even bring any clothes with me."

In other words, it wouldn't be here even if she had forgotten something, and Summer didn't have to bother searching.

“Look at me; I’m such a klutz. I’ll make you some food to eat on your journey. I’m sure it’ll be a long one. Since you’re pregnant now, you’ll definitely get hungry easily. I’ll make you some of your favorites to eat on the plane.”

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“There’s no need to go through all the trouble.” Victoria pulled Summer back. “Our flight comes with airplane meals. I can just eat what’s available.”

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However, Summer argued, insisting, “The food on the plane can’t compare to what I make. Either way, I’ll make a few pastries that taste good, even cold. Who knows when you’ll have the chance to eat them again?”

Victoria thought she had a point. “Alright, I’ll help you out.”

With that, Summer, a pro at pastry-making, made quite an array. Plus, Victoria developed a sweet tooth after becoming pregnant. Hence, she couldn’t help but sigh when she watched Summer pack them up into a box.

“All my favorites. Thank you, Summer. I appreciate it.”

“Of course!” Summer scoffed at her. “I wouldn’t have made all this for you weren’t going abroad.”

you if

At the mention of Victoria leaving the country, the two fell silent again, and moments later, Summer choked up, asking, “You’re not coming back

anymore, are you?"

"You can always visit me." Victoria smiled. "Or, you can come abroad to develop your career after I've settled down. The guys abroad are pretty hot

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too. By then, you can find a local and make beautiful children."

"Really?" Summer yearned for it. "In that case, you have to introduce someone to me. Don't keep the good ones for yourself. I call dibs!"

"They're all yours, how about that?"

"Very well."

The two of them continued chatting sporadically like that until Bane arrived in the evening.

"The car is downstairs. Are you all packed?"

"I am." Victoria nodded.

"Where's your suitcase? I'll help you out."

"No, it's okay. I have very little luggage. I can handle it myself."

At that, Bane helplessly gazed at her. "Victoria, you and I go way back. You don't have to be so polite with me."

promise you I'm not."

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Bane didn't believe her at first, but when he saw the 'suitcase' in Victoria's hand, he finally realized she wasn't being polite, for all she carried was a

small bag.

Bane looked at her for a while and eventually reached his hand out to her, saying, "I'll carry it for you."

Victoria hurriedly turned him down, feeling rather taken aback. "No need. It's very little stuff."

However, Bane still took the bag from her on his own accord, rendering Victoria frustrated for a while. That said, she didn't say anything in the end. Summer got into the car with them and headed to the airport.

After arriving at the airport, Summer eventually burst into tears, burying herself in Victoria's arms after holding her sadness back for the whole day. "I'm warning you, Victoria Selwyn, you better not forget me, or I will fly to wherever you are and pester you!"

Victoria's eyes were slightly red upon being influenced by Summer's emotions. She embraced the woman and said, "I won't forget anyone, especially not you."

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"Swear to me that I will forever be your best friend. Even if you go there, you

can't have a better friend than me."

"Alright, I swear."

"And if you have handsome friends, you can't keep them all to yourself. You have to introduce them to me."

"I will, I will."

"Also, I'll visit you whenever I can."

"I'll be waiting."

A gentle smile formed on his lips as Bane watched the two young women go back and forth.

On the other hand, his assistant, who was keeping an eye on the time, walked up to Bane and reminded him in a whisper, "Mr. Morison, it's almost time."

The smile on Bane's lips faded a little at that, and he gave the person an icy glare.

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The assistant instantly felt a chill down his spine and took two steps back, afraid to speak any further.

None of them dared to provoke Bane, for he was a madman, after all.

However, the assistant couldn't help pursing his lips as he looked toward Victoria, his gaze growing curious by the second.

None of them imagined a madman like Bane returning to the country for a woman and even treating her with such tenderness.

Victoria and Summer embraced each other for a long time, but it was Summer who pushed her away, sniffing while saying, "Alright, we can't hug each other anymore. The plane is about to take off. You should go quickly."

With that, the young woman even gave Victoria a shove.

Caught off guard, Victoria staggered a few steps back only to feel a firm grip around her waist—it was Bane standing beside her, holding her to prevent her from falling.

“Alright, I’ll leave now. I won’t watch you go in, or I’ll start crying again.”

Summer turned around at once, and she pretended to be casual as she waved her hand and left without looking back.

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Victoria stood in place, reluctant to take her eyes off her best friend’s retreating figure. Soon, Bane’s gentle voice came from above. “Come on, Vixie. Time to go.”

Victoria snapped back to reality and nodded gently. “Alright.”

As the plane ascended to its highest altitude, Victoria sat by the window with her eyes lowered, gazing at the city that had receded below. The night in Gandra was incredibly dazzling, and the distant lights resembled flickering stars on the earth. The longing in Victoria’s eyes gradually faded.

Goodbye, Gandra. Goodbye, my past. Goodbye, Alaric.

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Chapter 165 Cute Children

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“Welcome to Little Sun’s cooking stream! Today, we’re making two seafood dishes!”

Flash forward five years later, in Little Sun’s live stream on TikTok, two adorable children in cartoon outfits were removing the veins from the shrimps in front of the camera.

Nicole was holding a toothpick as she earnestly picked the veins out. However, she accidentally lost her grip, and the shrimp fell onto the floor. "Nicole!"

Startled, Nicole hastily bent over to look for the shrimp.

When she found it, she looked pleadingly at Nathan Selwyn, who was a little taller than her. Her dark pupils were filled with a pitiful look as she said, "I'm sorry, Nathan."

They were both five years old, but Nicole was innocent and pure, whereas Nathan possessed a calm and collected aura not found in others his age. Even though he still retained some child-like qualities, one could see from his face that he would grow up to have looks girls would swoon over.

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"Nathan!" Seeing that Nathan was ignoring her, Nicole extended two tender fingers from her fist and tugged the hem of Nathan's shirt, saying cutely, "I'm sorry, Nathan, so please forgive me, okay? I swear I'll only eat two shrimps for dinner, and you can have the rest!"

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"Still dare bring this up, huh? Who was the one who ate a whole plate of shrimp and upset her tummy? You're not allowed to have any shrimp today!" Nathan seemed like he wasn't open to negotiation.

When Nicole heard that, she pouted but dared not object. "Alright, since you've banned me from eating shrimp, I won't eat any."

With that, Nicole lowered her head and fiddled her thumbs, looking sad and wronged.

However, the viewers in the live stream laughed at the siblings' interactions and sent messages as they went.

'Nathan, you should be nicer to Nicole. She's already sad enough after getting diarrhea from eating too much shrimp!'

'Silly Nicole, when will you understand Nathan's kindness? He's doing it for your sake. Oh no, look at how you're pouting! Come, let me hug you.'

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All the viewers in the live stream loved watching the two cute children.

Every time the siblings started a live stream, they would come to watch the siblings interact with each other.

As the viewers flooded the chat with more messages, a notification caught their attention.

'Silent Night has entered the live stream.'

*

3/9

Silent Night was a wealthy man, and regular viewers of the children's live streams knew about him. He was very generous and would always send expensive gifts in the live stream.

As soon as Silent Night entered the live stream, he began spamming gifts for the children. In the blink of an eye, he had already spent huge a amount of money.

Nathan stood in front of the phone screen, watching the gifts pile up. There was a frown on his little face as he said, "Mr. Night, my mommy said that you mustn't send any more gifts."

Their mother had mentioned this a long time ago. She said that the children were live streaming just to share their lives, and if the viewers had
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gifts they got for free, they could send the gifts to the siblings. They didn't have to spend money to buy those gifts.

However, this man called Silent Night always spammed gifts when he arrived, and nothing they said could change his mind.

Nathan was a little upset.

However, when Nicole saw the gifts, she grinned and made a clumsy heart gesture toward the camera. "Thank you, Mr. Night! You're so generous!"

In the capital city of Uspein, a man sat in front of a desk in a huge and quiet study.

The man's gaze was dark. He had thin lips and dark hair, and his tightly pursed lips seemed to be frosted over. The emotions he expressed formed a sharp look on his handsome face.

It seemed like a very serious situation, but the phone in the man's hand was playing the live stream of the two cute children.

After he sent the gifts, the boy on the screen frowned sternly and said, "Mr. Night, my mommy said that you mustn't send any more gifts."

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However, the little girl next to the boy winked. She blew a kiss toward the camera and even made a heart gesture.

"Thank you, Mr. Night! You're so generous!"

The girl's voice was soft and adorable, and even her movements were a little clumsy. However, for some reason, she entered the most tender parts of his heart with great ease.

The man's thin lips, which were freezing a moment ago, seemed to have melted as a faint curve appeared on them.

He liked the little girl more in comparison. She wouldn't tell him to stop sending gifts as that boy did, and she would always blow kisses and make heart gestures at him.

If he also had a daughter...

He was still lost in thought when someone knocked on the door of the office.

The assistant opened the door and walked in, reminding him, "Mr. Cadogan, the meeting is starting soon. We have to go."

5/9

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349%

Chapter 165 Cute Children

Terrance Levane froze when he caught sight of the smile that had yet to

fade from Alaric's lips. A moment later, he realized what was going on when he heard the adorable voices coming from his phone.

6/9

He was watching the cute children again.

Now that he thought about it, everything seemed so bizarre.

A year ago, he accompanied Alaric to Uspein for a meeting. After the meeting, Alaric went to a jewelry shop to purchase some jewelry as a gift for his mother. While he was doing so, he bumped into two old ladies in the jewelry shop, but the old ladies stood out quite a lot.

This was because they were watching two cute children live-streaming while they picked out their jewelry.

Terrance could understand old ladies doing something unexpected, but he couldn't comprehend why Alaric would stop in his tracks when he heard the two children speaking. Alaric stood next to the old ladies, listening in and watching the live stream for a long while.

In the end, he even walked up to them and asked how to watch the live streams.

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This change shocked Terrance terribly.

After that, Alaric seemed to have picked up the habit of watching the cute children live-streaming.

Whenever the two children went live, Alaric would enter the live stream and send them gifts no matter what he was doing.

If he was in a meeting, he would leave after sending the gifts, then watch the video later on.

49%

At first, Terrance thought Alaric found the two children too cute and interesting, and that was why he behaved like that. Terrance assumed that Alaric would lose interest after a while but never expected the phenomenon would last until now. It had been one year since everything started, but Alaric wasn't bored with the children yet.

7/9

Terrance heard from his cousin, Peter, who was also Alaric's previous assistant, that Alaric had gone through a divorce before, and he was the one who made his wife so mad that she left him. Hence, Terrance began thinking.

Could it be that Alaric's ex-wife had something to do with Alaric enjoying

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the children's live streams so much?

Could it be that something happened between him and his ex-wife, so Alaric could only watch other people's children holding live streams?

However, he only dared make those guesses in his heart. He would never be bold enough to say those things out loud.

Terrance was still pondering when he suddenly heard the children's joyful cries coming from Alaric's phone.

“Mommy’s back!”

“Mommy!”

Alaric was about to leave the live stream and set out for the meeting, but when he heard the children saying that, he stopped midway. He was about to get up, but he sat in his seat instead.

On the small phone screen, a blurry and distant figure could be seen walking in through the door.

Even though the woman’s figure was blurry, Alaric felt his heart skip a beat

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when he saw the figure.

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The woman’s blurry and slender figure was shown in the corner of the screen for only a few seconds before disappearing.

At the same time, the two children’s footsteps could be heard as they ran toward the woman.

“Mommy.”

“Mommy, you’re back. You did great today, Mommy.”

The two children were very considerate as they asked the woman caring questions.

The woman was far away from the phone, so her mumbling voice was unclear.

Soon, the two little children went back to the screen.

“Everyone, our mommy is home, so we’ll stop streaming now.”

When Nathan came back, he explained the situation to the screen.

1/9

Chapter 166 Shocking

His twin sister began making heart gestures at the screen again.

“Bye, see you!”

The viewers were a little sad about it since the two children only streamed once or twice a week, and this time, they had to stop streaming so soon.

Despite their reluctance, the viewers bade the children goodbye.

The screen turned black with a notice that the stream had ended. Alaric was instantly stunned as he stared at the phone.

Terrance’s voice was heard.

“Mr. Cadogan, if we don’t leave now, we’ll be late.”

The next second, Alaric turned off his phone, then silently got up and walked outside.

Terrance was standing outside along with a newcomer they recently recruited. There were lots of matters to deal with in the company, so Alaric needed more than one assistant.

When the two saw Alaric coming out, they immediately greeted him.

Chapter 166 Shocking

“Mr. Cadogan.”

“Greetings, Mr. Cadogan.”

Alaric nodded coldly, expressionless as he walked past them.
The two immediately went after him.

•

Alaric's strides were large, and the other two followed behind at a close distance.

3/9

The new assistant was a girl who had just graduated, and she was interning under Terrance. Seeing that they were quite a distance from Alaric, she asked Terrance, "Terrance, was Mr. Cadogan watching the cute children's live stream again?"

Terrance nodded and said in a low voice, "Yes, I heard their voices when I was at the door just now."

"I sneaked a peek last time. Terrance, have you seen the children before?"

Terrance nodded.

"Yeah."

Chapter 166 Shocking

"Really?" The intern seemed to have found a comrade as she scooted closer and whispered, "Terrance, do you think that the children look a lot like Mr. Cadogan?"

When Terrance heard that, his expression shifted as he immediately warned in a suppressed voice, "Don't spout nonsense."

"Huh?" The intern was startled by his stern expression.

"If Mr. Cadogan hears you, he'll throw a fit."

When the intern heard that, she put on a confused expression.

"Why? Mr. Cadogan loves the two children, doesn't he?"

Terrance glanced at the slender figure ahead of them, then explained, "You just joined the company, so you don't know this, but a woman once took a child to see Mr. Cadogan, claiming that she had given birth to his child. The staff saw that the child looked a lot like Mr. Cadogan, but after some investigation, they found that the woman gave her baby plastic surgery just to deceive Mr. Cadogan. Even now, the child hasn't fully recovered yet. It's heartbreaking."

4/9

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The intern was speechless.

Did she give the baby plastic surgery?

What in the world?! Why would people stoop so low?

"Doesn't she know that DNA exists?"

"Criminals never think about getting caught while committing crimes; they all hope to get lucky. Anyway, don't mention these things in front of Mr. Cadogan."

The intern was a little confused.

She wanted to say that the two children in the live stream didn't look like they had gone through plastic surgery. Even the most meticulous plastic surgery would look slightly unnatural and lifeless, but the children were very lively.

However, even if they looked like him, Alaric couldn't possibly have children that big.

After all, in this world, if a woman truly gave birth to Alaric's children, she would've brought them to Alaric right away.

5/9

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All of this was too puzzling for the intern.

Thus, she began asking about other things.

"But of all those children, hasn't Mr. Cadogan suspected even once that it might not be plastic surgery, and the child is actually his?"

When Terrance heard that, he sneered.

"Who do

you

take Mr. Cadogan for? Even if he's completely drunk, he wouldn't touch a woman he doesn't know. No normal person could achieve that amount of self-control."

As if remembering something, Terrance added, "Forget strangers. Miss Johnson has been with Mr. Cadogan for years. She was considered his close friend and had saved his life before, but he wouldn't touch her even if he were drunk."

He had been Alaric's assistant for years, so he had witnessed Alaric's self-control with his own eyes.

When he saw it, he could only describe it as shocking.

The intern widened her eyes. "Not even Miss Johnson? That's indeed some

6/9

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shocking self-control!"

She had met Claudia before. The woman was gentle, beautiful, and elegant. In the intern's eyes, Claudia was the ideal partner for men, for she looked like someone entirely out of reach, but men still couldn't help coveting her. Alaric was even able to withstand Claudia's allure.

At that thought, the intern remembered a piece of gossip circulating, so she asked meekly, "Terrance, I heard that Mr. Cadogan has an ex-wife. Was he very reserved toward her too?"

At the mention of that, Terrance showed a face of regret.

"I'm not sure about that. Mr. Cadogan was already divorced when I took over my cousin's job, but I think Mr. Cadogan treated her the same. After all, she wasn't pregnant even after so many years of marriage."

"That makes sense." The intern rubbed her chin, gossip filling her mind.

"But I heard from my cousin that Mr. Cadogan's ex-wife was extremely pretty."

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"How pretty? Was she as beautiful as Miss Johnson?"

"I've never met her before, but my cousin said that she's a thousand times prettier than Miss Johnson."

The intern couldn't help but widen her eyes at that exaggeration.

"Your cousin seems to be fond of Mr. Cadogan's ex-wife."

"Yes, I heard that she's especially nice to the subordinates, and she's very capable as well."

The intern thought for a moment. It must take someone special to become Mrs. Cadogan.

At that thought, she looked ahead and began imagining the sort of woman who could stand next to Alaric.

However, before she could form an idea, a cold voice sounded in front of them.

"What are you whispering about? Are you trying to get fired?"

Terrance and the intern were still whispering, but Alaric's voice startled
8/9

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them. They parted ways and walked at their own pace as they hastily caught up with Alaric.

The intern was also chilled awake by Alaric's cold voice.

She thought that she must be hallucinating to even entertain the thought that a cold person like Alaric was capable of love.

Chapter 167

In the suburbs, there was a decently sized house with vintage decorations.

"Mommy! Mommy!"

After ending the live stream, the two children leaped into Victoria's embrace from both sides. Their arms were wide open as they hugged her and breathed in her unique scent of body wash.

The woman who crouched over and held Nicole had a slender figure. Her eyes were clear and cold like glass, and her eyelashes were long and dark. She looked very radiant and beautiful.

"Did you stop streaming?" When Victoria spoke, her voice was clear and bright like a spring.

"Yes." Nicole rubbed her face against Victoria's neck and chin, mumbling adorably.

Nathan glanced at his sister, then said in a relatively steady voice, "Mommy, that man sent us lots of gifts again."

That man? Victoria was stunned. "The same old Mr. Night?"

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Chapter 167 Care Lots of th

Nathan nodded, pursing his tiny lips as he said, "I relayed what you said to Mr. Night, Mommy, but he won't listen."

22

When Victoria heard that, she reached out and ruffled his hair, smiling faintly. "Never mind, then. Let's just leave him be."

Not wishing the children to be troubled by this problem for long, she quickly changed the topic. "Are you hungry? What would you like to eat

today?”

The gluttonous Nicole immediately began listing out dishes. “Mommy, I want to eat fried shrimp today and also desserts after dinner.”

Victoria turned toward Nathan. “What about you, Nathan? What would you like to eat?”

Nathan’s voice was reserved. “Mommy, I’m okay with anything.” His thoughts were simple. If he asked for a dish, his mother would have to make more food.

Even though he wanted to help her, both he and Nicole were too young.

Their mother wouldn’t let them into the kitchen for real. Victoria noticed Nathan’s gaze, then sighed lightly. “You don’t want Mommy to overwork

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herself, right, Nathan? Don’t worry, I won’t have to work tonight, so I just have to make dinner.”

3/8

“No, that’s not it...” Even though Nathan was slightly more considerate than Nicole, he was still a child, after all. Adults could see through children’s thoughts at a glance.

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“All right, I’ll make dinner, and you can do whatever you like. Give me one hour, all right?”

“Thank you, Mommy. Mwah!” Nicole freely planted a kiss on Victoria’s cheek, then went back to her room to play with her dolls.

After she left, Nathan whispered to Victoria, “Mommy, let me help you.”

“Be good, Nathan. Go and play.” In the end, Nathan could only return to his room.

After getting the two children into their rooms, she reached up and tied her hair, which reached her waist. Then, she grabbed an apron and put it on before walking into the kitchen.

For the past few years, she had been taking care of the children on her own.

When she first started, she didn’t know a lot of things, and she even

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scrambled to boil eggs, but for her children’s sake, Victoria learned a lot of things. She might be a hypocrite, but she simply wanted to care for her children well. She had to go to work but spent every minute of her free time with her children.

4/8

They were a single-parent family, so she wanted to do as much as she could for the children, just like how her father raised her back then. Save for work, all her time was spent on her children to make up for the other missing parent.

She didn’t know how to cook back then, but now, cooking was a piece of cake for her. Victoria cleaned the meat she bought, then marinated it.

Marination required time, so Victoria went to deal with other tasks. When

she was free, she remembered something, so she turned around and went to the living room. She took the phone the children used for live streaming.

During the live stream today, her two darlings gained a lot of fans, and the

comments on the newly released video were all saying that the children were cute and dramatic.

Among the comments, the one that had the most likes was 'How do you raise such obedient children?' Sent Lots of Gifts

She smiled, then replied mischievously, 'This is my first time raising children, so I probably can't provide any useful suggestions.'

After that, she went to look at the day's earnings.

She wished she hadn't. She found that Silent Night had given the two children lots of gifts again.

She roughly calculated the day's earnings, coupled with what they had earned in the past, and realized that they had earned a lot.

Victoria didn't lack money to raise her children.

The children were also live-streaming because of interest, so she didn't mind it as long as the children were happy. However, she never thought that they would earn so much from live-streaming. Anyway, the fans were quite interesting. She told them not to give gifts, and if they had to, they could just send some gifts they got for free.

However, this man called Silent Night would always give gifts in huge amounts.

Victoria navigated out of the dashboard and found Silent Night's account.

He had given so many gifts that it would be rude not to follow him back.

However, even if they were mutual, Silent Night never posted anything on his account, and the only account he was following was the children's.

It was as if...

The account was made purely to watch her children's streams. Also, they had followed each other for so long, but they never chatted.

Victoria had never seen someone like this, who would silently watch the live streams and give gifts but never asked for anything. When Victoria found the account, she noticed that the person was online, so she navigated to the chat room.

'Hello, I'm Nathan's and Nicole's mother. May I know your name? Can I chat with you?'

She wanted to pay him back. However, after the message was sent, there was no reply.

Victoria thought that he must be busy, and the meat was about ready at the Sent Lots of Gifts

time. So, she put the phone aside, then turned around and went into the kitchen to continue cooking.

In the meeting room, there were quite a lot of foreigners at this meeting.

Alaric sat on the leader's seat as he listened expressionlessly to their vivid presentations paired with slides.

Somewhere close by behind Alaric, Terrance was earnestly tidying the documents, and the intern beside him was scrambling to take notes and recordings.

The intern was sweating as she felt the pressure weigh upon her. She felt that she had been too naive. A meeting like this was too large for her, but Alaric was sitting there, looking calm as if he were sitting in his own office.

She couldn't help but be amazed, and she gave him a thumbs-up in her mind. Suddenly, Alaric's phone vibrated twice in his pocket. Alaric never looked at phone messages in a meeting. It was the same today. So, the message didn't affect him much.

However, a moment later, he seemed to have thought of something as he Sent Lots of Gifts

took out his phone in front of everyone.

When the intern and Terrance saw him doing that, they were shocked.

Alaric navigated to the app and realized that it was a message from the live-streaming account. He raised an eyebrow ever so slightly.

The account had never messaged him since they were mutually connected half a year ago. They never tried to get on each other's good side, so why did it message him of its own accord?

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When Alaric saw the person claiming to be the children's mother, he didn't reply as his gaze darkened. Just like that, he looked indifferently at his phone with his gaze lowered, and he didn't do anything else.

However, the people in the meeting room were discreetly looking at him because of his actions. Even the person presenting in front of the projector was beginning to stutter.

The intern had never encountered such a scene before, and she was so terrified that she gripped the pen in her hand, wishing she could just bury her head into her notebook. Terrance was shocked at first, but he calmed down after that.

He was a veteran in the company, having encountered every possible situation. After all, there was once when the two children were live-streaming during a meeting, and Alaric simply took out his phone in front of everyone.

There was supposedly a rule that no one was allowed to use their phones at a meeting. But Alaric was the boss.

1/8

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If he insisted on doing that, who would dare reprimand him?

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40%

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They could only pretend it never happened. The company was his, after all.

As was happening now, Terrance gave a light cough, then pretended nothing had happened as he said, "Continue."

In the next second, Alaric had already put away his phone nonchalantly and clasped his hands together on the table as he put on a cold and stern look.

Everyone was speechless. They wished he could stare at the phone instead of staring at them with a look as cold as this. At least they wouldn't have to be so nervous.

Hence, they began to regret it and hoped that Alaric would look at his phone again. However, they were met with disappointment. The meeting went on for another few hours before ending, and the man in the main seat never once looked at his phone.

When they adjourned, many people were trembling as they almost passed out in fatigue from maintaining their concentration for too long.

Alaric closed his folder and got up, walking expressionlessly out of the

Chapter 168 Looked Like Someone When He Was Young meeting room. It was only then that everyone let out a huge sigh of relief.

“Goodness, he’s finally gone. God knows how torturous this meeting was.”

“Same, I felt like my bottom was on fire, but I didn’t dare to move. Why does Alaric have such a strong aura?”

In truth, most of those in the meeting weren’t from the Cadogan Group. It was an international meeting, so many of them were employees from other companies.

However, as soon as Alaric appeared, everyone was instinctively fearful.

“He held a high position at a young age, and he always did things resolutely.

Who would have a strong aura but him?”

As they chatted, they began to gossip.

“Hey, tell you what, I heard that our president is going to send a woman to his room tonight.”

When the people heard something unrelated to work, they instantly switched to gossip mode as they scooted closer to ask for more details.

3/8

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“What? Sending a woman to Mr. Cadogan’s room? Are you serious?”

F

“I heard that Mr. Cadogan has shocking self-control, and he keeps himself pure. What is our president thinking?”

“What else? He’s just delusional and thinks that every man is like him, so he wants to gain Mr. Cadogan’s favor by doing this.”

“Tch, he might fail miserably and make Mr. Cadogan angry instead.”

After dinner, Nathan moved the dishes into the kitchen. Nicole went to the kitchen to fetch a clean cloth, then took off her shoes and tried to get on a chair to help Victoria wipe the table.

“Nicole, let Mommy do it.”

Victoria took the cloth from Nicole’s hands, then carried Nicole onto the floor with one arm.

Nicole, who didn’t get to wipe the table, pouted in dissatisfaction. “But I want to help Mommy.”

4/8

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“Be good, Nicole. I know you’re trying to help, but you’re still small. You can help me when you’ve grown up, okay?”

With that, Victoria reached out and poked Nicole’s small nose.

When Nicole heard that, she stared at her with her large r***es. She was wearing milky white pajamas, and she looked so soft and tender that

she looked like fresh mochi.

She seemed to be pondering Victoria's words, and when she was done, she nodded earnestly.

"All right, when I've grown up, I'll help Mommy with lots of chores."

"Okay, it's a promise, then. Go and play, Nicole."

"Mm-hmm. Mommy, kiss me." Nicole pointed at her forehead.

Victoria couldn't help smiling as she lowered her head and planted a kiss on the child's flawless forehead. It was only then that Nicole turned around and left, satisfied.

Nathan witnessed this scene when he came out of the kitchen, and an envious look flashed across his eyes.

5/8

48%

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He strode in his little steps up to Victoria, but he didn't make any sounds.

6/8

Victoria was wiping the table, and when she lowered her head, she found Nathan standing by her legs, looking at her with an expectant gaze. His lips were tightly pursed, and he looked like a mini adult.

Victoria was stunned. After a while, she lowered her head and planted a kiss on his forehead as well.

"Go play with your sister."

Nathan, who was a little upset, turned visibly happy when he received Victoria's kiss. However, no matter how happy he was, he simply pursed his lips tightly before leaving.

As Victoria watched his receding figure, she somehow thought of someone. Nathan looked like a younger version of a certain someone.

That person also behaved like that when he was young. He wouldn't openly express his joy, so if one didn't observe him closely, one couldn't even fathom his expressions.

Just as expected, the genes had a hand in this.

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Victoria never thought that she would have twins at first. When she went overseas later on, she finally went for another checkup with her father and created a file.

After that, she heard from the doctor that she was having twins.

Then, she used up a lot of energy to give birth to Nathan and Nicole. Nathan was reserved, and he didn't like to talk. He also frowned very frequently, just like his father.

Nicole, on the other hand, was cheerful and active. She was a glutton, and she would eat more than anyone else since birth. Her eyes were bright, and her cries were loud and clear.

Victoria even suspected that Nicole was the reason she became a glutton when she was pregnant.

Even though the siblings were born one after the other, and there was only a slight difference in the times they were born, Nathan became the older

brother while Nicole assumed the position of the younger sister. After that, perhaps because of his position or because of his personality, Nathan had always taken extra care of Nicole.

7/8

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Chapter 168 Looked Like Someone When He Was Young

All in all, one of the two children never worried her, whereas the other made her worry a lot. No matter what, their arrival brought warmth and companionship into Victoria's lonely life.

At that thought, Victoria curved her lips into a faint yet good-looking smile. Her phone rang, and when she looked at it, she found that it was a call from her bestie, Summer.

Victoria had to wash the dishes, so she put the call on hands-free mode, then went into the kitchen as she talked to Summer.

"You're finally free?"

Summer stretched and yawned, then said, "Nope."

"You're calling me even when you're not free?"

"Come on. I just wanted to ask you something. What do you think of coming back home?"

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The smile on Victoria's lips vanished when she heard Summer's words. Then, she turned off the water and wore the dishwashing gloves.

"Just look at you. Whenever I mention coming back to Gandra, you would keep quiet." Summer was upset by Victoria's reaction. "I don't get it, Victoria. It's been a long time since that happened. Even if you had made a promise to Claudia, it should be over by now."

However, Victoria remained silent upon hearing that.

Then, Summer continued, "The industry isn't doing well in other countries. Yet, our country made it, and it is one of the top companies that want to hire you. They wouldn't have kept the position for you if you weren't outstanding. Did you know

they called me multiple times and told me to persuade you? They didn't want to lose a talented person like you."

After hearing that, Victoria couldn't help but chuckle. "So? What benefits did they offer you to come and persuade me?"

"Hey! Don't even think about accusing me of being a conspirator!" Summer huffed.

"Do you think I'm that kind of a person? I just think the job suits you since it pays

1/7

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well and is helpful for your future. That is why I want you to go. There is no way I will accept what they offered me. Though, they have indeed given me quite the treat."

"So... What did they offer you?"

"Erm... It's just a small benefit. They told me they would give me a sum of money worth your salary point if you worked at their company for a whole year."

"The Floyd Corporation sure is generous." Victoria smiled.

"Yeah. They are quite remarkable. I've heard their CEO is young, handsome, and, most importantly, single. He is the one that wants to invite you to work in his company. Moreover, he tried to meet you, but you refused him."

"How can I find the time to meet him when I'm busy with work? Furthermore, I must care for my children when I get home."

"That's true." Summer's heart softened when Victoria mentioned the children.

“Where’s Nicole and Nathan?” she asked.

“They are in the living room.”

“Even if you choose to take care of them yourself, you do not have to do all the work.

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The least you can do is hire someone to do the cooking.”

3/7

“I would prefer cooking by myself. Plus, I did hire a cleaner to clean my house.”

W

“Nonetheless, cooking requires a substantial investment of your time and energy.”

“Summer!” Victoria called out all of a sudden. Her voice was soft but firm. “The constant demands of motherhood will leave any woman exhausted. Nevertheless, I believe it’s worth it if I’m happy. Do you agree?”

When Summer heard those words, she kept quiet. After some time, she said,

“Technically speaking, yes. However, I can’t understand since I’m not a mother myself. I think it’s best to have a deep conversation with you about this topic after I have started a family.”

In response, Victoria chuckled but said nothing.

Yet, Summer wasn’t planning on letting it slide. “Enough of that. Are you sure nothing is stopping you from working at Floyd Corporation? It’s not because of the

promise you made to Claudia, right? Truthfully, I can't understand what you are afraid of. After all, the company isn't at Gandra."

At that moment, Victoria sighed under the weight of Summer's annoyance. "It's not

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because of her," she replied.

4/7

"If it's not because of her, what is it? I can't think of any other reasons to explain your choice."

"It's because I plan on starting a company myself."

"What?" Summer wondered if she had heard it wrong and asked, "Are you saying you plan to start a company?"

"I was going to tell you after everything is settled. After all, I'm still going through the procedures, so I still can't say for sure if I'll be able to realize my goal."

In that instant, Summer's shrill voice could be heard on the other end of the phone.

"Ahhh!"

At that moment, Victoria was relieved she had put the call on speaker before

Summer's loud voice echoed through the kitchen because otherwise, she might have lost her hearing.

"Why didn't you tell me you were going to start a company? If you had told me sooner, I wouldn't have tried to persuade you to go to Floyd Corporation, saying that

they had specifically left you a place for a high-paying job. After all, nothing beats

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the freedom of starting your own company.”

“It isn’t done, though. Won’t you be disappointed if I fail in the end?”

“Why would I be disappointed? I will never be disappointed in you because you can always accomplish whatever you set your mind to. You can do it, Victoria!”

When Victoria realized Summer was rooting for her, a smile spread across her face.

“Thanks for your compliment, but I have failed many times too. Anyway, all I have to do now is to try my best.”

“Good luck then. I will undoubtedly apply for an executive position after you have established your company.”

“Sure. I’ll leave a spot for you, alright?”

“That’s more like it. Don’t even think about giving it to someone else.”

After conversing for a little while, Victoria finished washing the dishes, and only then did Summer hang up the phone.

After Victoria had cleaned the kitchen, she decided to take an afternoon nap. After giving the kids some reminders, she went back to her room. Before she fell asleep,

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she opened Tik Tok and saw that Silent Night had not yet replied to her message. However, she didn't think much and put away her phone: Since she only had twenty minutes to rest, every minute was precious. When her head hit the pillow, she promptly fell asleep. She had trouble sleeping for the first two years but could now fall asleep instantly without medication.

Meanwhile, a waitress delivered lunch to a customer in the presidential suite. She couldn't help but sneak a few glances when she saw the man on the couch who exuded a sense of intimidation and elegance.

At that moment, Terrance told the waitress to place the food on the table before asking her to leave. Then, he said to Alaric, "Your lunch has arrived, Mr. Cadogan." "Okay." Alaric hummed but remained seated on the couch.

However, Terrance held his tongue because he could tell Alaric was still occupied with his work. After all, Alaric was a workaholic and didn't like it when someone interrupted him while working. If Alaric hadn't skipped lunch, Terrance wouldn't have requested lunch delivery.

A few minutes later, Terrance couldn't help but remind Alaric again. "The food will

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get cold if you don't eat it sooner, Mr. Cadogan."

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As soon as his words fell, Alaric gave him a cold glare. Immediately, Terrance froze as he felt chills run down his spine. Then, without saying anything more, he turned around and left.

On the other hand, Alaric pursed his lips and continued to work. After some time, he finally finished his work.

When Terrance noticed it, he immediately ran over and put the things away. Seeing that Alaric had forgotten to take his phone, he gave it to Alaric and said, "You forgot your phone, Mr. Cadogan."

When Alaric took the phone, he suddenly remembered the message.

Ever since Victoria had left him five years ago, his life had been occupied with work.

Other than working, he would spend the rest of his time looking at the live stream of two kids. He didn't know why, but he felt it might be because they were cute and could soothe his loneliness.

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Alaric could have guessed why Victoria wanted to contact him. He knew she must have wanted to return the money he sent in the live stream, so he avoided responding to her. Aside from a single instance five years ago, he had never reclaimed any money he had given to others.

At that moment, he recalled what had happened five years ago. When he returned home, he discovered that she had not taken the checks he had given her or the bank card his mother had given her. Whether it was money he gave her or Victoria asked for it, she had never once spent a single penny of either source. Instead, she returned everything to him, and it seemed she was trying to convey that she owed him nothing from that point forward. Although it had been five years since that happened, Alaric was still infuriated whenever he thought about it. What a ruthless woman she is, he thought.

Since the food had been left cold for a long time, it tasted terrible.

When Terrance saw that Alaric had only taken a few bites, he said, "Please eat more, Mr. Cadogan. You still have a meeting in the afternoon."

However, the response he got was Alaric slamming the door behind him. As Terrance stood there and looked at the leftovers, he sighed and called the waitress
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to take them away.

After the meeting ended, it was already nighttime. When Alaric left the meeting room, he rubbed his throbbing temple and said deeply, "Is there anything else I need to do tonight?"

Concerned, Terrance shook his head and said, "There is nothing more, Mr. Cadogan. You can now go back and rest. However, are you feeling alright?"

"Why wouldn't I be?" Alaric replied with a stoic expression.

Since Terrance could tell by Alaric's pale face that he wasn't feeling well, he was concerned for Alaric's health and wondered what kind of food he should order. Meanwhile, Alaric appeared exhausted as they returned, closing his eyes for a nap. At that time, Terrance was tidying the papers about today's meeting. When he felt slightly tired, he turned to look at Alaric. His face looks pale. It was already pale during the meeting but is even paler now. Is he having gastric pain? When he thought about it, he was anxious. He wanted to ask Alaric about his condition but feared that he would disturb Alaric. Thus, after a moment of hesitation, he chose to keep quiet. He texted the intern, who had already returned to the hotel after finishing work, telling her to prepare Alaric's medication beforehand.

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When they were about to arrive at the hotel, Terrance got a call from their business partner, Mr. Welson.

"Are you guys back at the hotel yet, Mr. Levane?"

"We are almost there. Is something the matter?"

After hearing that, Mr. Welson laughed c**ly and said, "It's nothing important. I just want to tell you that I have prepared a surprise for Mr. Cadogan. I hope he likes it."

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"A surprise?" After spending nearly a day in meetings, how did he have the energy to plan a surprise? Moreover, I don't think Mr. Cadogan will enjoy his surprise, seeing that he suffers from gastric pain. After Terrance hung up the phone, he glanced at Alaric and sighed inwardly.

When they arrived at the hotel and entered the elevator, he told Alaric about what Mr. Welson had said. After hearing that, Alaric had a stoic expression and breathed unevenly. However, Terrance didn't notice it and was still in deep thought. What surprise will Mr. Welson prepare for Mr. Cadogan? Is it a gift? But... Mr. Cadogan doesn't need anything. After all, he is rich.

Then, Terrance recalled when many people sent them gifts, including wine, jade,

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and many others, because they desired to collaborate with Alaric. However, none of them knew that Alaric was only interested in collaborating with reputable companies and never cared about these gifts, so he always returned them. Since

they were so close to finalizing the contract, Terrance had a hard time understanding what Mr. Welson's goal was trying to accomplish. As he thought about it, they arrived at Alaric's room. Terrance immediately swiped the room card and opened the door. "After you, Mr. Cadogan."

In the meantime, Alaric pursed his lips and walked into the room, but he stopped dead in his tracks as soon as he set foot inside.

Terrance was curious when he saw Alaric standing there without being moved. "Is something the matter, Mr. Cadogan?" he asked.

As soon as Terrance finished his sentence, Alaric stepped back a few paces and exited the room immediately afterward.

Terrance was confused by his action.

"Something doesn't smell right," Alaric remarked, and the rhythm of his breath was off.

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"Huh? What kind of smell?" Terrance stepped forward to get a whiff, but he detected nothing. Chapter 170 Alaric Is Suffering From Gastric Pain

At this moment, cold sweats began to form on Alaric's forehead, and he had a grim expression. "Go inside."

Nonetheless, Terrance detected nothing amiss and continued sniffing as he walked forward. "Everything's fine, Mr. Cadogan."

After hearing that, Alaric seemed to be lost for words. He looked at Terrance incredulously and insisted, "Walk further inside."

"Okay." However, Terrance did not dare to defy Alaric's orders because he was the boss, so Terrance walked further inside.

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Meanwhile, Alaric stood by the door with a cold expression, seemingly as if he was waiting for something. Soon, Terrance became anxious as he took a few more steps and turned around to look at Alaric, but Alaric only signaled him to keep walking. Consequently, Terrance had to comply, still unsure of what was happening. Isn't everything fine? What's wrong with this room? There is no way a burglar is inside, right? While deep in thought, he noticed a white figure fling itself toward him with a strong perfume scent. Before he could react, the figure had snuggled into his embrace, and when he came to, he realized he was hugging a sexy blonde woman. Instantaneously, he was rendered speechless by what had just occurred.

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At that moment, the blonde threw her arms around his neck, leaning in so that he could see the curve of her body, and called out to him intimately.

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Terrance became red in the face after he realized the source of Mr. Welson's surprise. It's this woman! I now understand what Mr. Cadogan means when he says, "Something doesn't smell right."

Suddenly, the blonde woman's perfume overwhelmed him to suffocation.

"Darling!" The woman called out to him sweetly with a weird Corynthean tone.

"Let go of me!" He struggled to push the woman away.

On the other hand, Alaric saw the unfolding scene and frowned. He took another few steps back, keeping his distance from the room. Initially, he was only perspiring

on his forehead, but he soon began to sweat on the tip of his nose, and his face became noticeably paler.

With great force, Terrance pushed the woman away, and it was then that he heard Alaric's icy voice. "Hurry up and take her away!"

Although Terrance panicked, he could still hear something wrong with Alaric's voice. As Terrance grabbed the woman's wrists, he turned around and looked at

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Alaric. In that split second, he noticed Alaric leaning against the wall, clutching his stomach with a pale expression. "Mr. Cadogan!"