

## Departure with a Belly Chapter 391

Departure with a Belly Chapter 391

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*Worker had just jumped out to argue after hearing their unsavory conversation and did  
dex expres the girls to target her own family. Biting her lip, she asked, "What did you  
Shat were we wrong? Only people like you with problematic families would be close  
to Bane Both of you are weirdos*

*Hey Victoria if you date him, which one of you will cheat on the other?"*

*She nearly exploded with rage and was about to charge forward to argue with them  
When a loud sound came from behind her. She turned around in shock to see the trash  
He now had a hole in it after being punched. The perpetrator was Bane, who had been  
standing off to one side with a cold expression.*

*Plis frigid gaze lingered on her for an instant before shifting to the gossiping girls. A  
smile that didn't fit him then appeared on his face.*

*if you really do want to know, ask my fist."*

*"Weirdo The girls were scared by him and left quickly after that.*

*1212 Thu, 6 Jul 6*

*Chapter 391 Truth About The Suicide*

*When the girls were gone, Bane went in front of her, his menacing look disappearing  
completely and transforming him back into the gentle youth he was. "Why are you so*

*stupid? They were talking about me, not you. Why did you argue with them?"*

*Victoria frowned and naturally answered, "They weren't right, so I had to go argue with them. What do you care?"*

*She then turned around and left.*

*2/7*

*Bane sent her home that night. It was the only time he had seen him lose his temper so intensely; he never did do it before or after that incident.*

*The event should have been a brief interlude in her life but thinking back on it, Bane's childhood had to be extremely horrible. A broken family was much worse than one with a single parent; at least she had a peaceful family environment and enjoyed wholehearted love from her father.*

*At that thought, she came back to herself and looked toward Ethan. "I know a little about it. Why?"*

*He understood at once. "You really don't know much, Miss Selwyn."*

*"If you're referring to his family, I've already known about it since I was in school."*

*12:42 Thu, 6 Ju*

*Chapter 391 Truth About The Suicide*

*"Did you know that Mrs. Morison committed suicide shortly after the family went overseas?"*

*Her heart stuttered when she heard the word 'suicide. "What did you say?"*

*“Judging by your reaction, you really don’t know about it.”*

*3/7*

*Victoria pursed her lips. She really didn’t know about this, only that the entire Morison family had moved overseas not long after the scandal. Bane went with them and there was no news of the family after that. She and Bane met again only after many years had passed and his behavior seemed extremely stable, so she had always assumed that his family problems had been resolved. It hadn’t been a great memory, so she hadn’t been brave enough to ask about his family business. She hadn’t known that his mother had killed herself.*

*“Because of...her?” Victoria was about to say ‘the mistress’ but didn’t think it was appropriate with Nathan present and so changed her wording.*

*Ethan was intelligent and immediately knew whom she was talking about, nodding.*

*“Yes. His mother chose to end herself after falling apart emotionally. If you really do want to know more, I will tell you about it another time.”*

*She knew at once that whatever he was about to say wasn’t suitable for Nathan’s ears*

*Chapter 391 Truth About The Suicide*

*and nodded. “Okay. Find me when you have the chance.”*

*“Sure, Miss Selwyn.”*

*A/7*

*They went along the long corridor and soon entered the interior. She could see Bane*

*holding Nicole's hand from a long distance away as they waited in the doorway. He still looked unbothered when she came closer.*

*"You're here? Did you get sick during the journey? You don't look well." He eyed her face in concern.*

*He had put Victoria under house arrest yet pretended that nothing was wrong, which made her furious and open her mouth, ready to retort instinctively. However, she remembered what Ethan had said about Bane's mother killing herself and swallowed her words instead before bowing her head, pretending she hadn't heard what he had said.*

*Never mind. Arguing with him won't change anything.*

*Nicole ran toward her. "Mummy!"*

*Victoria then noticed how red Nicole's eyes were as if the girl had just been crying. "Did you feel sick during the journey?"*

*Chapter 391 Truth About The Suicide*

*Her daughter nodded pitifully.*

*"I'll make you some soup later, alright?"*

*"Okay."*

*Bane had probably taken good care of Nicole then.*

*A man resembling a butler soon came over to introduce himself. "Hello, Miss Selwyn.*

*I'm Donald and will be your butler from now on. Tell me if you need anything and I'll*

*make arrangements for it.”*

*Victoria’s expression was cool and she didn’t look at him with courtesy. While Donald hadn’t offended her, she didn’t really want to be here and so had no obligation to be polite to everyone here. If the butler didn’t like it, then it was Bane’s problem.*

*5/7*

*True enough, Donald touched his head when he saw her reaction. Did I say something that offended her?*

*Bane smiled. “They’ve experienced a tiring journey, plus the roads here aren’t flat. They must be extremely exhausted, so take them away to rest.”*

*Donald immediately took the opportunity. “Ah. I’ll bring Miss Selwyn, Miss Nicole, and Chapter 391 Truth About The Suicide*

*Mr. Nathan away so they can rest.”*

*They all had to go to their rooms first, so Victoria nodded and brought the children along with her.*

*The butler led them to the first floor and then to their respective rooms. She was in no mood to study the interior decorations and deposited her luggage to one side before taking off her shoes and collapsing on the bed. It was very soft and even bounced when she lay on it. It was very comfortable and it would have been better if she had been here for a holiday instead of being placed under house arrest.*

*At that thought, she closed her eyes.*

*Knock! Knock!*

*Her eyes opened. "Who is it?"*

*"It's me, Miss Selwyn." Ethan's voice came from outside the door.*

*It's him?*

*She sat up. "Come on in."*

*He pushed the door open and entered the room, while she got off the bed and sat on*

*6/7*

*12:42 Thu 6 Jul A*

*Chapter 391 Truth About The Suicide*

*the side of the couch.*

*777*

*"Mr. Morison is out right now, so I'll tell you all about it. You do have to prepare yourself though, Miss Selwyn."*

*His words confused her. Prepare yourself? Was it far more complicated than suicide?*

*Chapter 392*

*Ethan left the room after more than ten minutes.*

*1/6*

*Victoria remained on the couch silently after he had gone. It would be surprising if Bane had turned out normal after what had happened. As it turned out, Mrs. Morison hadn't just killed herself but had become insane before she did, chattering nonsense and even harming her own son. Bane had been scolded and abused by her, suffering countless injuries as a result. However, he hadn't retaliated nor made light of it probably because*

*he pitied his mother for ending up like this at such a young age.*

*It had been Old Mr. Morison who eventually discovered this and rescued Bane. She had*

*committed suicide the day that Old Mr. Morison took him away, which resulted in an uproar within the family. Old Mr. Morison wasn't like Bane's father in that the former maintained a rigid household and put his morals first, so he immediately rescinded Bane's father's power and made Bane the next successor to the Morisons' family business.*

*Old Mr. Morison had wanted to get rid of the heavily pregnant mistress who had wanted to marry into the family, but he didn't do so because of her condition. Instead, he had taken her away for a paternity test and only allowed her to remain after he knew the child was a Morison.*

*Chapter 392 Don't Want To Like Him Anymore*

*Meanwhile, Bane didn't have anyone to comfort him after being traumatized by his family experiences and his mother but had to face continuous training as the family successor. He was soon an extremely suitable successor, but his heart had become stone cold as well.*

*2/6*

*The reason Ethan had thought Bane to be mad all stemmed from the mistress who had given birth to a daughter. Since she couldn't get a son during her first attempt, she refused to give up and tried to get pregnant again afterward.*

*After succeeding, she had tried to show off in front of Bane, yet her young daughter hadn't known anything at all. The girl treated him as a close relative after seeing him daily and wanted hugs from Bane. The girl had been several years old by then and spread her arms toward him while standing beside him. Bane had then looked down at*

*her and studied her face before kneeling in front of her.*

*“B–bane. Hug me.”*

*There was a smile lingering at his mouth as he stroked her face with his finger. “Who asked you to call me that?”*

*“Bane!”*

*“Who asked you to call me that?” Bane asked again after getting no reply.*

*Chapter 392 Don't Want To Like Him Anymore*

*3/6*

*However, the girl couldn't answer him at all. Bane smiled slightly, though his voice was freezing. “Is this the useless piece of rubbish she has worked so hard to give birth to? She's several years old already but cannot understand a simple question.”*

*Ethan had stood behind Bane and didn't know how to answer that since it was far too awkward. Ethan had wanted to say that Bane shouldn't expect too much from a small child. Had it been his biological sister, would Bane call her useless?*

*It hadn't been serious at that point since the attack had been verbal, but soon the girl had snuck into Bane's arms to demand a hug. However, he had emotionlessly pushed her away and caused her to fall to the ground. The child was too young and only knew that it hurt, but the only way she knew how to express it was by crying.*

*The Morison genes were extremely prominent. Even though she had been birthed by the mistress, the girl bore no resemblance to her mother at all and looked a lot like Bane's father. That meant that the girl's eyes looked similar to Bane's. No one would have suspected anything from their appearances if the two of them were claimed to be biological siblings.*

*After the child had burst into tears, Bane knelt there and watched the child sob as if*



*watching a performance. The sounds of a child crying should have been annoying, yet he had looked as if he was enjoying a beautiful melody. When he had had enough, he asked someone to cover the child's mouth and drag her away. The child never came to*

*Chapter 392 Don't Want To Like Him Anymore*

*look for him after that.*

*It was this occurrence which made Ethan think that Bane had a psychopathic inclination. At the very least, Bane wasn't normal in terms of his mental health. Bane should visit a psychiatrist, but Ethan did not dare bring it up for fear that he would be targeted as well.*

*Victoria still didn't understand what Bane was thinking. Had he put her under house arrest just because he fancied her, or because he couldn't stand the thought of her being ripped away from him?*

*At that thought, she massaged the spot between her eyebrows. If Bane truly had mental issues, then the entire thing had become slightly complicated.*

*4/6*

*She remained in her room for a while before going off to find her children and accompany them. Soon, the butler came to see her. He informed her that the kitchen had prepared some pre-meal desserts and invited them to go downstairs to enjoy the food.*

*She paused and did not accept it, instead asking the butler, "Where's Bane? I want to see him."*

*"Uh... Mr. Morison has gone out on business."*

*Chapter 392 Don't Want To Like Him Anymore*

*5/6*

*Victoria noted a strange look flashing across his face when she asked the question and instantly became alert. "What sort of business?"*

*However, Donald had already reoriented himself. "Miss Selwyn, I'm not so clear on the details. I'm merely his butler and don't know anything regarding his personal schedule."*

*How could she ever believe that Bane's butler didn't know his schedule?*

*She sneered internally before replying, "Fine. It's okay if you don't know his schedule."*

*The butler reminded her, "Miss Selwyn? What about dessert?"*

*"We don't want it since we're not hungry. You don't have to summon us for the main meal either."*

*The butler didn't know what to say, sensing that something had offended her during their conversation. However, he couldn't say anything about it and so excused himself.*

*When the door had closed, Nicole immediately clung to Victoria's waist, causing the latter to look down in amusement. "What's wrong? Don't you love dessert? Why didn't you say anything?"*

*Nicole pouted as she muttered, "Mr. Bane is so fierce toward you. I don't want to like*

*14, Thu, Ð*

*Chapter 392 Don't Want To Like Him Anymore*

*him anymore."*

*Victoria paused. "How did you know?"*

*6/6*

*"I was crying because I wanted to go back and find you, but he didn't let me. He's a bad person!"*

*Bad person.*

*The words stung at Victoria's heart. Bane should have been someone deemed trusted*

*and reliable by the children, but he had become a bad person just like that. She didn't want her relationship with Bane to end up falling apart if she could help it.*

*"Mummy, can we not stay with Mr. Bane anymore? I want to go find Mr. Night."*

*She pursed her lips and hugged her other child before saying softly, "Alright. I'll find a way to bring you to see Mr. Night."*

*She didn't know if Summer had helped her make contact with Alaric. Did he figure out what happened to me and the children?*

### *Chapter 393*

*As soon as Summer and Erik got off the plane at the airport, they rushed toward the location which Victoria had given them.*

*When the car stopped in front of the hotel, Summer began to compare the buildings which Victoria had described and realized that all of them matched. She removed her seatbelt while internally marveling at Victoria's sharp observation skills and memory, then opened the door and got off the car openly.*

*She was about to head for the hotel when Erik caught her arm.*

*"Calm down. We can't go in just like that."*

*10*

*Her eyes widened as she asked frantically, "It's an emergency, so why can't I go in? Do I*

*have to wait here and risk my best friend's safety? What can I do by waiting out here?"*

*He glanced at her and looked at the hotel with narrowed eyes before declaring, "I'll go in*

*alone."*

*"What?" Summer's heart stuttered.*

*"Stay here and wait for me. If I don't come out within half an hour, call the police."*

*Chapter 393 Did You Find Her*

*She was speechless. "H-How can I allow you to go in by yourself?"*

*Erik was gripping her shoulders, so she was forced to look up at him from a short distance away. "Listen, Summer. If we go in together and encounter something, who's going to call the police and save us? One of us has to remain outside."*

*"Your explanation makes sense, but Victoria's my friend. Even if we have to endanger ourselves, I should be the one to go in while you wait here."*

*His gaze became more worried. "Are you sure you can get things done after going in? You won't ruin the plan?"*

*She didn't know what to say to that.*

*"If you encounter a man, can you take him in a fight yourself?"*

*Summer hesitated. "Not really."*

*"Tell me then. Are you going to fight me for the chance to go in?"*

*277*

*"Fine. You can go in, but you have 20 minutes. If you don't come out before then, I'll call the police."*

*Chapter 393 Did You Find Her*

*the street. Go wait there and don't come over if I don't come out later. Just call the police."*

*As if afraid she would act recklessly, he paused again before reminding her, "Do you understand? Don't be reckless."*

*3/7*

*Summer frowned at that and was about to retort instinctively. However, she*

*remembered that he had been the one suggesting ideas to her the entire time. He didn't have to be here yet had followed her here just because of her call. What argument did she have against him?*

*"Alright." She eventually pursed her lips and looked at him seriously before he went in.*

*"Be careful. Don't force yourself if you cannot manage the situation. Just verify Victoria's condition for now."*

*Her words took him aback and he smiled slightly. "Okay."*

*When Erik had left, Summer went into the cafe as he had told her to and found a seat beside the window. However, she wasn't in the mood to drink her coffee and kept staring at the hotel opposite before checking the time. He had gone in for 5 minutes, and she didn't know if Victoria was still in there or had been discovered after calling them. It was a pity Summer couldn't contact Victoria anymore.*

*Chapter 393 Did You Find Her*

*After some time, the waitress came over to ask whether Summer wanted a refill.*

*477*

*Summer looked down at her cup and found that she hadn't even drunk a mouthful of it.*

*"No, thanks."*

*After some consideration, she felt that it was weird not to drink coffee in a cafe. What if someone suspected her?*

*She then stopped the waitress and mentioned that she wasn't accustomed to drinking coffee by itself before asking the waitress to serve her some dessert. When it was served, she made a show of picking up her spoon and taking two big spoonfuls in an attempt to quickly finish it.*

*However, she didn't expect to choke after eating far too much at once. Quickly, she*

*picked up her already cold coffee to take two big mouthfuls which got rid of the disgusting feeling. She looked at the dessert and the coffee, then decided not to have any more of them.*

*Her senses were completely focused on the hotel opposite. Fifteen minutes had passed, which meant there were five minutes left. If Erik didn't show up after five minutes, she had to call the police even though she had promised Victoria not to do so. However, Summer would have to do so if the situation turned awry.*

*A ringtone that sounded out-of-place suddenly sounded and scared Summer so*

*1243 Thu, 6 Jul (*

*Chapter 393 Did You Find Her*

*5/7*

*immensely that she nearly jumped off her seat. After calming down, she picked up her phone and instantly took the call when she saw Erik's number on the screen. "Hello, Devil."*

*She then covered her mouth in fear. Oh, no. I've accidentally called him by his nickname.*

*Erik was silent for a moment as if shocked by the direct way she had addressed him.*

*Eventually, he said, "Come over."*

*"Huh?" Summer thought she had misheard. "Can I go in? Did you find Victoria?"*

*"No." His voice was neutral as he calmly explained, "The hotel room is already vacated. It looks like they have been gone for a while."*

*Summer hung up and rushed over at once. When she arrived, she found him standing at the doorway while two hotel workers stared at both of them with flabbergasted expressions.*

*When he saw her approach, Erik informed her, "Here it is."*

*She ran in and searched the room, finding it completely deserted.*

*"Look around and see if there are any clues left behind."*

*Chapter 393 Did You Find Her*

*"Okay."*

*They went inside and searched separately but found nothing after more than ten minutes.*

*"We didn't find anything? This isn't Victoria's style. She already knew she needed to contact us, so logically she would find a way to leave behind some evidence of her presence if she was taken away."*

*Summer was Victoria's best friend, so she knew Summer very well. "You're right. That means that someone has taken whatever she left behind."*

*Erik and Summer glanced at each other before going outside to ask the workers, "Did they come back after checking out?"*

*677*

*The workers shook their heads. "No. They left extremely quickly and were gone as soon*

*as they got into their cars. They never came back."*

*Never came back...*

*"But..."*

*Summer became hopeful and immediately asked, "But what?"*

*Chapter 391 Did You Find Her*

*The workers looked at Summer's panicked expression and then at the extraordinarily composed Erik. "A group of people came by after they were gone. They looked very menacing but didn't seem to belong to the same side as the first."*

7/7

*“A group of people? Menacing?” Summer frowned. “Is it Bane’s enemy? Who else can it be?”*

*Erik glanced at her. “Did you manage to contact Alaric when I came over to investigate the place?”*

*She paused and questioned instinctively. “Are you saying-*

*“Judging by his abilities, it’s not entirely impossible for him to be faster than us.”*

*Her eyes brightened at his explanation. “If that is what happened, that will be great. I’m just worried that it’s not him.”*

*“Come on, let’s leave this place first.”*

*Chapter 394*

*Victoria stayed in the room to accompany the children for a long time, but Bane never returned it led Victoria to wonder*

*I’m trapped in here right now. What matter does he have to deal with?*

*Besides, the butler showed a strange expression on his face when I asked him the questions*

*What happened?*

*Victoria decided to check it out there. I can’t sit around.*

*At that, Victoria asked the children to stay in the room. Then, she walked away.*

*She wasn’t expecting to bump into Bane when she left the room. He had changed into a new outfit and wasn’t wearing his glasses.*

*A smile split Bane’s expressionless face at the sight of her. “Victoria.*

*She was surprised by his hospitality.*

*She glanced at his unusual outfit and asked, “Where did you go?”*



*Chapter 394 11 Be a Good Husband and a Good Fath*

*Bane answered, "I've got something to deal with."*

*"And it needed a change of clothes?" She frowned.*

*He paused at her words. A moment later, a gentle smile formed on his curled lips. "So, you did pay attention to my outfits. I almost thought I wasn't worth your time."*

*Victoria couldn't believe it. That's how he interpreted my words?*

*2/8*

*She was speechless, but she remembered her goal. Therefore, she prompted, "Are you free now? I've got something to tell you."*

*"Oh?" He arched his eyebrows in surprise. "You finally agreed to talk to me? Then yes, I'm free. No matter when you ask, I always have time for you."*

*She looked away and coldly answered, "Let's talk somewhere quiet."*

*"Where do you want to go?"*

*"This is your place. You decide."*

*"All right. Let's go downstairs, shall we? We can talk over dinner."*

*"I don't have the appetite." She scanned her surroundings. The balcony came into her*

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*Chapter 394 Be a Good Husband and a Good Fath*

*view. "Let's go to the balcony."*

*"Sure. As long as you're happy."*

*Victoria turned around and headed toward the balcony.*

*"Wait." He removed his coat and put it on her shoulders. "It's an outdoor balcony. You won't want to catch a cold."*

*3/8*

*At first, Victoria almost shrugged off his coat. However, the story of his miserable youth came into her mind. Besides, she was seeking a truce. Thus, she resisted the urge.*

*The pair walked over to the balcony.*

*The night closed in. The villa was situated in the mountains. Therefore, when she looked out from the balcony, all she saw was an endless expanse of forest rather than city lights.*

*Even the air smelled like fresh grass and soil.*

*As the night breeze brushed against them, Victoria began, "I've learned your story."*

*Bane shot her a confused look. "What story?"*

*Chapter 394 II Be a Good Husband and a Good Fath*

*She turned to look at his face. "Technically, it's what happened to your mother."*

*She didn't bother to beat around the bush. She approached by cutting to the chase, causing the smile to freeze on his face.*

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*"You never told us what happened after you were back in the country. We didn't dare to ask because it was a sensitive topic. However, you never talked about it to any of us over the past years."*

*At that, he looked away from her face and watched into the distance.*

*Even though his expression remained the same, Victoria could sense the change in his aura as she was standing next to him. He wasn't smiling, and she began to feel pressure from him.*

*"Victoria, some people don't deserve to know the truth."*

*Victoria frowned. "None of us? Not even your best friend?"*

*"Best friend?" He sneered. "How am I supposed to talk to my so-called best friend if he*

*was the one stealing you from me?”*

*Her frown burrowed deeper between her brows.*

*Chapter 394 111 Be a Good Husband and a Good Fath*

*5/8*

*“Victoria.” Bane took a few steps toward her. His hot breath brushed against her face. “I don’t want you to pity me, so I didn’t tell you anything. However, you still learned it somewhere. Did Ethan tell you that?”*

*The pair stood close to each other, but Victoria couldn’t feel the warmth from him as if he was an ice sculpture.*

*Moreover, she could see him narrowing his eyes dangerously, indicating that he would seek Ethan up to punish him.*

*The thought was disturbing. Victoria couldn’t help but scowl. “I asked him the questions. He didn’t reveal them of his free will.”*

*Her words put a smile on his thin lips. His gentle gaze studied her face. “Victoria, you’re always a kind-hearted person, no matter the circumstance.”*

*He remembered their younger days back when the girls were gossiping about him. He didn’t mind the rumors at all.*

*And she could’ve pretended she didn’t hear them. She could’ve walked away without standing up for him.*

*However, she called the girls out and defended him. He would never allow himself to let*

*Chapter 394 111 Be a Good Husband and a Good Fath*

*such a woman go.*

*She was the sun, but he was a demon who belonged to the darkness.*

*However, he had walked alone in the darkness for too long. Therefore, he would grasp*

*the light that was shed on him at all costs.*

4

*“It has nothing to do with being kind–hearted.” She explained, “I threw the question at him. Moreover, I’m abducted. He had no choice but to tell me.”*

*Humming a response, Bane nodded. “If you say so. It’s indeed a good excuse.”*

*Even though he said so, Victoria had a feeling that he didn’t take her words to his heart.*

*Will Ethan be okay?*

*No. There’s no time for the thought. I’ll deal with it later. What matters now is to talk*

*Bane out of his plan.*

6/8

*“Back then...” Victoria bit her lips. “If you ever needed somebody to talk to, all of us were*

*willing to listen to your problems as a friend. Even though it happened a long time ago, but-”*

*“Victoria.” Bane, the usually patient man, interrupted her, “Listen, it’s all in the past. Can*

*Chapter 394 I’ll Be a Good Husband and a Good Fath*

*we not talk about this anymore? You don’t have to worry about our future together. I*

*won’t allow it to create a divide between us. I’m not the kind of man like my*

*father, and*

7/8

*neither will you follow my mother’s tragedy. I promise I’ll be a good husband to you and a good father to your children.”*

*Victoria felt helpless.*

*He doesn’t want to talk to me about this.*

*It seems like he’s keeping his feelings bottled up inside him.*

*“Bane. I don’t doubt your words. However, you shouldn’t waste your efforts on me. I can’t return your feelings nor do I want to. Do you understand?”*

*“It’s getting chilly out here. Enough talk for today. Donald told me that you haven’t eaten. Do you want to go downstairs to grab a bite?”*

*“I’ll never fall for you no matter how long you keep me here. I told you before, and I thought you understood?”*

*“It seems like you’re not hungry at all. If so, I’ll ask Donald to send the dessert to your room later. You should at least eat some before you go to bed.”*

*Chapter 394 || Be a Good Husband and a Good Fath*

*Victoria had no words to describe her feelings.*

*He won’t listen to me.*

*He probably heard me but refuses to take my words seriously.*

*Their conversation was rather one-sided. She spoke up about what was in her mind while he tried to get his point across. Both of them were on different channels.*

*The fruitless attempt exhausted her.*

*Her feet stayed rooted to the ground. She fluttered her eyes closed and weakly began,*

*“I’ll stop seeing you if you don’t want to talk about yourself.”*

*Chapter 395*

*This time, Bane no longer danced around the issue. “Victoria, we’re living under the same roof. We’ll see each other every day.”*

*1/8*

*“So, that’s what you want, huh? To push a friend away even when you’re redeemable at*

*the moment? Do you want us to drift apart in the future for you to finally give up?”*

*“That’s not what I mean.” He took a step forward and held her shoulders firmly. His*

voice was deep. *"I won't give up on you no matter what happens."*

*Victoria was speechless.*

*The next second, Bane swept her up in his arms before she could protest. He brought her toward the room.*

*His sudden movement took her by surprise. She belatedly tried to struggle out of his arms. However, the difference in strength between them was huge. Thus, she failed in her attempt.*

*She could only watch him as he carried her into the room.*

*As he walked toward the bed, Victoria's face went pale and her voice cracked. "What*

*Chapter 395 Will They Follow Me?*

*are you doing, Bane? I'll have you know that I won't obey you if you try something on me, even if it's at the cost of my life."*

*2/8*

*He stopped in his tracks when her words reached him. He no longer walked toward the bed.*

*"Let me go!"*

*A pained expression flashed across his eyes. "Victoria, do I look like a bad person to you? Do you think I would force myself on you?"*

*"You can't promise you won't do that."*

*His grip around her went soft after they came into the room. Therefore, Victoria found the opportunity to struggle out of his arms. The coat slipped off her shoulder and fell to the ground with a thud.*

*Bane craned his neck to see the coat on the ground. A moment later, he slowly bent down to pick it up. After picking up the clothing, he softly explained to her, "I'll never*

*force you to do anything you don't like."*

*"Oh yeah? Then, let me and my children go."*

*12,4 Thu, 6 Jul 6*

*Chapter 395 Will They Follow Me?*

*"I promise you everything but this. Rest well."*

*Bane left for the exit after that. Victoria had the room all to herself. Her attempt earlier exhausted her, so she panted heavily as she watched him go.*

*The door shut with a thud. She sighed in relief once Bane was out of sight. I can't defend myself if he ever tries anything. When can I leave this place?*

*Victoria could never rest well as the thought burdened her. She got up from the bed and scanned the room.*

*The room was located on the second level. Even the windows on the balcony were made of anti-theft glass. Victoria could never dream of escaping from the window.*

*3/8*

*Therefore, she went to the children's room, only to make the sad discovery that their room was made of the same materials. The rooms are designed to avoid us from escaping. After all, such things couldn't be done in a short period. And here's the thing with the villa... Did Bane plan all this from the beginning?*

*The thought sent a shiver down her spine.*

*"Mommy?"*

*12:44*

*Chapter 395 Will They Follow Me?*

*4/8*

*The children's voice snapped her out of her trance. She turned to them with pursed lips*

*before reminding them, "Go to bed early, all right? I need to go out to deal with something."*

*"Nathan, look after Nicole for me. Don't stay up late, okay?"*

*Nicole could tell the recent events were a sign of trouble. Therefore, she nodded without any protest when Victoria proposed that she was heading out.*

*After leaving the room, Victoria descended the stairs. She was determined to find a way*

*out of this place. I bet Bane had gone to Ethan at the moment. I wonder what will happen to Ethan. He must've thought this through if he chose to tell me the truth.*

*She had mixed opinions about Ethan.*

*At first, she thought Ethan was helping Bane with his deeds. However, Ethan told her about the story behind everything. The encounter changed her opinion. He doesn't wish this to happen, but he is Bane's assistant. He had no choice but to obey Bane's orders.*

*The butler, Donald, approached her when she went downstairs.*

*"Are you feeling hungry,*

*Miss Selwyn? Is there anything I can help you with?"*

*Chapter 395 Will They Follow Me?*

*Victoria simply denied it. "I'm not hungry."*

*"Oh." Donald blinked. A strange expression fell on his face. Then, why did she come downstairs?*

*"I can't fall asleep, so I feel like taking a stroll around the villa."*

*74%*

*5/8*

*At that, Donald immediately suggested, "I'll come with you. I can show you around the*



*villa too.”*

*Victoria turned his offer down. “It’s okay. I’m fine by myself.”*

*“But-”*

*“What is it?” Her voice turned cold sharply. “Am I a prisoner? Do you want to deprive me of the freedom to walk around the villa?”*

*After that, she held out her hands to Donald. “Let’s see. How about we start by tying me*

*up with the ropes or chains and throwing me back into the room? From now on, I don’t need to come downstairs for meals. Your people can feed me in the room. Do you like my suggestion?”*

*Her words put him in an awkward position. “Miss Selwyn...”*

*Chapter 395 VA They Follow Me?*

*“Go ahead. Get them,” Victoria urged,*

*At last, the butler had no choice but to let her be. He sighed quietly. “Forget about it, Miss Selwyn. You’re free to go anywhere you want. However, it’s getting dark. There are lights around the villa, but they don’t cover every corner.”*

*He took out a flashlight from the cabinet beside them and gave it to her. “Take this, Miss Selwyn. You might need this during your stroll,”*

*Victoria was taken aback by the change in his attitude. He’s extreme. One minute he was stopping me from going anywhere and the next, he was offering the flashlight to*

*1. me. Since he offers, I don’t see a point in turning him down.*

*Victoria took the flashlight from him. “Your men won’t follow me, will they?”*

*A wide grin crossed Donald’s face. “Don’t worry, Miss Selwyn. You can go around as you*

*please. I won't ask them to follow you."*

*The undertone in his words was clear to Victoria, and she didn't think it was the other way around. He's mocking me. He gives me such freedom because I can never leave the villa even if I try. All I can do is wander around the villa until I wear my legs out.*

*The vague idea occurred to her as soon as she found the anti-theft glass in her room.*

*Chapter 395 Will They Follow Me?*

*Bane came prepared, or else he wouldn't strike in the first place. It's impossible to escape.*

*7/0*

*Even so, she didn't want to give up. I wonder if Summer has gotten in touch with Alaric. Even if she found Alaric, he doesn't necessarily know where I was taken.*

*Victoria left with the flashlight without further delay.*

*Once she walked away, Donald made a call. "Mr. Morison, since Miss Selwyn asked to walk around the villa, I got her a flashlight. Is it all right with you?"*

*Bane fell into silence for a moment before he spoke up again. "It's fine. Let her be. She'll*

*eventually come back later."*

*"All right, Mr. Morison."*

*As expected, Victoria returned to the villa about an hour later. She looked like a mess.*

*When he caught sight of her, Donald approached her with a smile. "Welcome back after one hour, Miss Selwyn. How did your adventure go? Do you want to rest? Are you feeling hungry? I can ask them to prepare supper for you if you want."*

*Victoria stared at him blankly. She found no concerns in his tone. Instead, he was*

*115 TL. O*

### *Chapter 395 Will They Follow Me?*

*mocking her for making a fruitless attempt.*

*She gave him a brief and dry laugh before heading upstairs.*

### Chapter 396

Victoria was not the only one feeling frustrated. Summer and Erik were as well. It was late at night, and though they had booked separate rooms, Summer came straight to Erik's room because they needed to discuss Victoria's matter, and she could not sleep. When she found him, he had just come out of the bathroom bare-chested with a towel around his waist.

Erik wanted to speak, but Summer would not give him a chance and squeezed through the door, seeming like she did not notice anything inappropriate with her actions.

Once she entered the door, she began talking about Victoria. "Where do you think he would bring Victoria?" She continued while making her way further inside the room, "It's a pity I haven't interacted much with Bane during the past five years. If I knew him well, I might be able to guess where he would bring Victoria according to his personality."

In the meantime, Erik was still at the door, watching her walk further inside the room, unaware he was half-naked, He turned around and looked at her hopelessly, thinking, Ist

she too naive, or does she not see me as a man, which is why she doesn't seem bothered by this?

While thinking of that, he closed the room's door and opened the closet door by the

### Chapter 396 He Found Out Before Us

entrance to get a bathrobe. Otherwise, she might accuse him of being a pervert after she realized he was half-naked,

After putting on the robe, he tied the strings, only revealing a little patch of his chest.

On the other hand, Summer finally noticed that she did not get a response from the other after talking for so long, so she turned to look at him. She found nothing strange about him because he had already put on the bathrobe.

“I’ve been talking for so long, but why aren’t you reacting?”

Erik sat before her and replied, “There’s no use guessing. The capital is a huge place.”

At that, Summer felt devastated because he was right. This country’s capital is so huge, so it was almost impossible to find someone among the many people there.

When Erik saw she was silent, he poured himself a cup of warm water and took a sip.

“Are you still not going to file a report?”

Summer bit her lips, obviously hesitant. At first, she insisted on following what Victoria said and not calling the police, but now.... If this situation was prolonged, would she be able to hold back her urge to call the police?

Chapter 396 He Found Out Before Us

“Have

you tried contacting Alaric?” Erik suddenly asked that question.

“Yes. You’re right. I should call him.”

Then, Summer immediately took out her phone to call Alaric again. Since he did not answer all her previous calls, she stopped calling him. She thought her call would still go unanswered but did not expect the call would be answered after a few rings, followed by a cold, attractive voice. “Hello?”

3/7

Although they had not seen each other for five years, they were so close back then that Summer immediately recognized Alaric’s voice. But since they had not seen each other

for so long, it took her a while to wake up from her daze and tighten her grip on the phone. "Alaric? This is Summer. You finally answered my calls. Victoria, she's-"

Summer immediately announced who she was and was about to tell him about Victoria's kidnapping. However, she did not expect he would interrupt her before she could finish. "I know what you're talking about."

"Huh? You found out already?" Summer was confused. How did he find out? She hadn't been able to contact him before just now.

"Yes."

Chapter 396 He Found Out Before Us

"So... You rushed here to save her? Do you know where she is?"

Alaric replied almost instantly, "Where are you? I'll get a car to grab you."

She asked, "Don't tell me you're already at Mauldin's capital?"

"I am."

4/7

At that moment, Summer, who had previously accused him of being an unreliable man, fell silent as she was proven wrong. The man she thought was unreliable had found out about Victoria's disappearance at some point and had come all the way to Mauldin's capital.

Summer looked into Erik's eyes and informed Alaric, "We're at the hotel she stayed in before she left."

To test if Alaric knew, she deliberately left out the hotel's name, but she did not expect him to just hum in response after she said that and asked that she meet him down at the lobby. He did not ask for the hotel's name and address.

Once the call ended, Summer held the phone in her hands, obviously still in a state of

shock.

Meanwhile, Erik smiled. "Seems like he found out before us."

12:45

Chapter 396 He Found Out Before Us

"But... Why wasn't he answering his phone?"

"Perhaps he was on a plane during then. That's why Victoria couldn't reach him."

5/7

If that were the case, everything was clear now. Alaric found out about Victoria's situation and chased after her, but he could not answer his phone mid-flight, so Victoria could not reach him. What about after he descended the plane? Why didn't he check his phone? Wasn't he afraid he would miss any important messages? The more Summer thought about it, the more uneasy she felt. She thought she had to have a talk with Alaric once he arrived.

"Alright. Let's tidy up and hurry downstairs."

Then, Summer rose to her feet to return to her room so that she could get ready, but not before she exhorted Erik.

When Erik saw how she came and left in such a hurry, like he did not matter, he pursed his lips but could only resign himself to packing his things.

Several minutes later, the car Alaric arranged for them successfully picked them up.

The long-wheelbase black car moved quickly under the night sky like a fierce, strong leopard.

Chapter 396 He Found Out Before Us

Once inside, Erik saw Alaric, and they nodded as a greeting, and Alaric also nodded at Summer when he saw her.

“When did Snowball contact you?”

After hearing the name Snowball, Summer took quite a while to comprehend that it was Victoria’s nickname. Then, she told Alaric the time she and Victoria last spoke, followed by how she could not get a hold of him.

6/7

“Did you not think about the possibility that you might miss some crucial information if you didn’t answer your phone? If I hadn’t answered Victoria’s call, you-”

“I wouldn’t let something happen to her either way. I did not answer the calls because I was on the plane.”

“What about after landing? It’s been so long since you got off the plane. Why didn’t you look at your phone?”

Probably because she had Victoria’s support, or maybe she thought what he had done five years ago was too much. Summer was no longer afraid of him and was even courageous enough to reprimand him.

A while later, Alaric might have reflected on his actions and pursed his lips. “I’m sorry.

Chapter 306 He Found Out Before Us

Back then, I received news that said she was here, so I did not check my phone.”

Summer said that to vent her feelings and did not expect he would apologize.

Chapter 397 We’ve Dispatched Sufficient Personnel

*Chapter 397*

1/6

*At first, Summer thought that with Alaric’s character, he would probably react the same as five years ago and retort coldly with a “So what?”*

*Although she did not know him that well, this was not how he behaved five years ago.*

*She was not expecting he would... apologize. Due to that apology, she was at a loss for how to react. It took her a while before waving her hand, indicating that this matter was over.*

*"We found the room empty when we arrived. I heard from the staff that a group came before us and searched her room, looking for something. Were they your men?"*

*Alaric nodded. "Yes. They found some of her things."*

*"What were they?"*

*Due to its size, Alaric did not bring along the dress Victoria left behind. Instead, he brought along the earring she left in the cupboard. Being the intelligent woman she was, she left her stuff in more noticeable spots and then left subtle clues in hidden places. In such situations, it would be difficult for others to find those clues without a detailed search.*

*Chapter 397 We've Dispatched Sufficient Personnel*

*"This is one of the earrings I gave her," Summer exclaimed in shock when she saw them. "Did you find them inside the room?"*

*"Yes."*

*2/6*

*"Then, her whereabouts... Do you know that as well?" At that thought, she held onto the earring and choked up. She bit her lips and asked, "Victoria told me not to go to the cops, but should we listen to her in this situation? If I were to call the cops, would she blame me for what might happen next?"*

*"She told you not to?" Alaric keenly caught that and narrowed his eyes dangerously.*

*"Did she tell you in person?"*



*It was then that Summer realized something; the man before her was not an ordinary man. He and Bane were love rivals, and if he knew Victoria personally said not to call the cops, then...*

*When she thought of that, she immediately tried reasoning with him, "Yes, she did, but it was because I advised her to do so. Bane has looked after her for the past five years, and he's just in an extreme phase. Also, he didn't harm her. What if something happens*

*to him if we call the cops? What would Victoria think?"*

*When Alaric heard her specific instruction not to contact the authority, he had to admit*

*12:45*

*Chapter 397 We've Dispatched Sufficient Personnel*

*he was jealous. Still, he was confident that with his abilities, he could save Victoria*

*3/6*

*without the cops. Moreover, this was a matter of personal grudges. He and Bane were acquaintances in the past, so he did not want things to end badly. However, having that assumption and hearing it from the person he liked was a different feeling.*

*"Did you hear what I just said? Don't call the cops. I feel like your relationship with Victoria might be affected if something happens to Bane."*

*Alaric shot her a cold stare, and even though he stayed silent, it was clear from his behavior that he had accepted Summer's suggestion.*

*Meanwhile, she was frightened by that stare and scooped closer to Erik, whispering,*

*"Look at how scary he looks. I don't even know how my best friend fell in love with someone like him."*

*With her unintentional proximity, he could smell the faint fragrance on her, and he glanced at the distance between them before explaining, "To each his own."*

*Summer was speechless because she felt it was lame for the devil to say such words.*

*A long while later, she could not hold back her urge and asked Alaric, "You look so calm*

*Do you already have a plan?"*

*"Search." That was Alaric's reply.*

*73%*

*Chapter 397 We've Dispatched Sufficient Personnel*

*That rendered her speechless. Search? I know we have to search, but the problem is where do we begin?*

*"The capital is huge. Where are we going to find her? We need to narrow it down."*

*Alaric did not reply, but his cold expression somewhat angered her. She wanted to speak up, but Erik stopped her. After staring into each other's eyes, she took out her phone and typed something to show Erik. 'What are you doing?'*

*He took the phone and typed his reply. "Who do you think is more anxious? Him or you?"*

*As*

*you said, those are his children. Would he be sitting so calmly if he doesn't know anything?"*

*After reading Erik's analysis, Summer deemed it reasonable because, by right, Alaric*

*should be more anxious than her. Even if he was not worried about Victoria, he must be*

*worried sick about his children. Judging by his confidence, she thought there was nothing to worry about.*

*Following that, Alaric brought them to another place to settle down and left.*

*Summer met Ethan, who told her to look for him if she needed anything and that she*

could stay there without worry. However, she could not help asking, "Does Mr. Cadogan knows where Victoria is?"

73%

Chapter 397 We've Dispatched Sufficient Personnel

5/6

Knowing that she and Victoria were good friends, he told her the truth. "We don't know her exact location, but we have a general pin and are currently searching."

"A general pin?" Summer could not help but feel amazed. It was just like Erik's explanation! No wonder Alaric seemed so calm; it turned out he had found a general location. Though, why did he not tell her?

"Yes, but we still need some time to find her exact location." Ethan was honest.

"How long will that take?"

Despite knowing Alaric was certain about this, as Victoria's best friend, Summer still felt anxious.

Her question, however, left Ethan stumped. He hesitated momentarily before answering, "I'm not sure how long it will take, but judging from Mr. Cadogan's character, it might not be long before that. Miss Jones, you can rest assured while staying here that we will inform you immediately once we receive any news."

Rest assured? No way can I do that under such circumstances. So, she asked, "Can I help with anything?"

Help? Ethan shook his head. "Thank you, Miss Jones, but we've already dispatched

Chapter 397 We've Dispatched Sufficient Personnel

sufficient personnel for this."

*In the end, she could only dejectedly return to her room. Oh, Victoria. I hope you're fine.*

*The following day.*

*As Victoria was worried last night's incident would happen again, she did not stay in her room but went to sleep with her children. They had no trouble falling asleep because their mother was with them, so they slept soundly while she lay in bed until almost dawn before falling asleep.*

*After a few hours of light sleep, she heard someone knocking on the door. "Miss. Selwyn, good morning. We've prepared breakfast."*

*She was tired but forced herself to open her eyes and look at the time—it was 7.30AM. Even though she was not hungry, her two children needed a healthy daily schedule. At that thought, she got up and brought the children downstairs for breakfast.*

*Chapter 398*

*do the table have walled in the seat opposite them and amdied when he saw them coming Morning*

*Sauce Nicole and Rathan could sense the strange amonghere, they averted their gare achen bane gremed them and did not respond However he did not und and even got up to help then pull out their chars*

*The kit looked at Victone walling for her person Then, they tan down an receiving a nad from her, after which she sat beside them Since she was announ during the first two days she had not been eating well. She was famished and served herself the food she land*

*Meanwhile Sane was slighly shocked to see her eating*

*Victone however was secretly sheering thinking he might be surprised that she was Not sefusing to eat after being confined to the house*

*Truth be told she could resort to going on a hunger strike when dealing with Bane because he would not let her starve of the genuinely cared about her, but that was not the path she wanted to walk as she had her children What would they do if she went*

«

*o hunger strike How could she bear to let them starve with her? Since she gave*

*Chapter 398 A Damned Hopeless Romantic*

*birth to them, she would do her absolute best to protect them. Therefore, the most pivotal part was eating and having sufficient sleep.*

*2/7*

*Not only did she serve herself, but she also brought the kids their food, exhorting them, "Eat up."*

*4*

*No one knew what the children were thinking, but they gobbled up the food like it was their last meal.*

*"Slow down." Bane was afraid they might choke, so he reminded them.*

*Unfortunately, the three did not seem to hear him because they quickly ate all their food and wiped their mouths.*

*"Let's go."*

*Once Victoria left, the children followed behind her. They moved so swiftly that they soon left Bane's line of sight.*

*He and Donald were left speechless. The atmosphere in the room instantly turned awkward, and Donald tentatively spoke up after a while, "Mr. Mo-"*

*Just as he was about to speak, he was interrupted by Bane. "Don't talk while eating."*

*115 Tu*

*Chapter 398 A Damned Hopeless Romantic*

*In the end, Donald could only zip up.*

*Bane seemed unaffected by it and sat there, slowly finishing his plate of food before elegantly wiping his lips and getting up. “Get them to prepare a plate of desserts and send them upstairs at around 10.00AM.”*

*Donald replied, “Yes, Mr. Morison.”*

*Seeing Bane walk away, Donald could not help but praise him for his good temper but then saw the crumpled-up tissue when he approached the table. His face fell slightly before he quickly cleaned up.*

*“Mommy, will Mr. Bane be mad at us if we treat him like that?”*

*3/7*

*After having their meal and returning to their room, the mother and children trio began their discussion. Nicole was the first to ask questions, to which Victoria replied, “Mad? It’d be better if he is. Perhaps he would send us away.”*

*Although she did not tell the kids they were confined to this house, she knew they were smart and would sense something amiss about their situation without her telling them, just like what happened at breakfast. She asked them to eat up, so they quickly ate*

*Chapter 398 A Damned Hopeless Romantic*

*4/7*

*their food and followed her upstairs. They worked together seamlessly and got back at Bane. It was such a great feeling because Victoria felt like she and her babies had a tacit understanding of each other.*

*She reached over to rub Nicole’s head and praised her happily, “You did great today.*

*Keep up the good work.”*

*Having gotten praised, Nicole hugged Victoria's arm. "Thank you, Mommy, for the compliment. I'll work harder in the future."*

*Meanwhile, Nathan watched them and could not help pinching Nicole's chubby cheeks. "Nathan, you're so mean. I forbid you from pinching me." She pushed his hand away and snuggled into Victoria's arms.*

*Later, the three did the same routine during lunch and dinner. They did not resist and went downstairs for their meal every time, but no matter what Bane told them, they would not reply. Instead, they would just focus on eating. The three carried on with their lives as normal but ignored Bane like he did not exist.*

*That act persisted until the next day when Donald could not stand it anymore. However, he dared not speak because Bane was still eating. Once he finished his meal, Donald asked, "Mr. Morison, aren't you mad?"*

*Chapter 398 A Damned Hopeless Romantic*

*"What for?"*

*Donald felt sorry for Bane. "Aren't you mad at them for treating you like this?"*

*Hearing that, Bane smiled indifferently. "They're right in front of me, staying here with me, and are mine. What's there to be mad about?"*

*Donald was rendered speechless, but there was one phrase in his mind, a damned hopeless romantic.*

*"As long as they're with me, they can do whatever they want. Don't mind them."*

*"I understand, Mr. Morison."*

*Since the one involved did not find it upsetting, an outsider like Donald was in no position to say anything.*

*For two consecutive days, Victoria did not see Ethan anywhere when she came down for her meal or walk, not even his shadow. On the third day, she could not stand it anymore and instructed the children after breakfast, "Head upstairs first."*

*The two immediately understood and left, leaving only Bane, Victoria, and Donald on the side.*

#### *Chapter 398 A Damned Hopeless Romantic*

*Bane was yet to finish his food but still set down his spoon and smiled at her. "Is there anything you need?"*

*6/7*

*Without beating around the bush, she asked, "Where's Mr. Hudson?"*

*"Do you need him for something?"*

*"Yes."*

*"I've sent him out on an assignment. What would you like him to do? How about I get someone else to help?"*

*Donald, standing on the side, immediately volunteered himself. "That's right, Miss Selwyn. Mr. Hudson is quite busy, but I can offer my assistance if you need anything."*

*The butler, who nearly never spoke during meals, piped up today. What are they trying to hide?*

*"I don't want anyone else but him," Victoria demanded.*

*The words Bane said the other day worried her, but she thought he would not punish Ethan too severely after discovering what had happened since Ethan had been his trustworthy assistant. At most, he might be punished or have his salary cut.*

#### *Chapter 399 A Damned Hopeless Romantic*

*Victoria believed Ethan might have prepared to face those consequences, but now, it*



*seemed like it was not as simple as she thought. It had been two days since she last saw him, and that worried her.*

*Bane looked at her gently. "Victoria, must it be Mr. Hudson?"*

*She nodded determinedly. "Do you mean to say I can't see him anymore?"*

*"That's not true." Bane smiled. "If you need him, I'll just call him back."*

70

*Chapter 399 Injured*

*Chapter 399*

73%

1/6

*Bane kept his word. Since he promised to bring Ethan back, Victoria saw him that very afternoon. He wore the same attire as before and was very polite when talking to her, "Miss Selwyn, Mr. Morison said you were looking for me. Is there something important, or do you have anything to ask of me?"*

*She was scanning him with her eyes. Seeing him standing there with no obvious injuries on his face and neck, she asked, "Are you hurt?"*

*The question surprised him before he shook his head. "No."*

*"Wrong." Victoria exposed him. "If you weren't injured, you'd be confused and asked why*

*I asked that instead of telling me no."*

*Once she finished, she pressed onto Ethan's chest. As she moved too quickly, he did not see it coming, and with the pressure she applied, the pain forced him to retreat and groan.*

*She paled, going over to support him. "Are you alright?"*

*Realizing he had been exposed, Ethan quickly pushed her hand away and was about to leave.*

*12 16 Thù, bu*

*Chapter 205 injured*

*“Is it because you told me about his past?”*

*Hearing that, Ethan suddenly stopped walking.*

*“You’ve been with him for so long. Did he beat you up because you told me that?”*

*2/6*

*Then, he recalled what Bane said when they were on their way here and shook his head. “Miss Selwyn, you’re overthinking things. Mr. Morison would never try to kill me.”*

*“Then, what’s with that?”*

*He tugged his lips. “Miss Selwyn, how are you sure I’m injured? Was it from the push just now? With your strength, any man would be taken by surprise.”*

*“Are you sure?”*

*The fact that he was unwilling to admit it shocked Victoria even more. It was clearly just a small matter, but Ethan got injured because of this and was even helping Bane hide things from her.*

*“Were you threatened?” After asking that, she fell silent. If that was the case, it might jeopardize his career if she insisted on prodding. Forget it. Hence, she concluded,*

*“Since you said you’re fine, I believe you.”*

*Chapter 399 Injured*

*“Do you need me for anything else, Miss Selwyn?”*

*“You may leave.”*

*3/6*

*She had thought about it carefully. If he had gotten injured over such a trivial matter, pursuing this would only continue to hurt him. However, she did not expect Bane would do such horrendous things to those beside him.*

*Once Ethan left, Bane came looking for her. "Did you see him? Are you satisfied now?" While looking at him, Victoria noticed he still had a warm, gentle smile, looking ever so gentlemanly. Though he looked almost the same as before, the current Bane gave her chills. She looked at him and remarked, "I've known you for many years, but I feel like I've just met you today."*

*He was surprised to hear that, and his smile faded a little. "Are you disappointed in me?"*

*She glanced at the ground. "He's been with you for years and even helped you this time."*

*"Yes, Mr. Hudson is a great help, and I'm satisfied with him."*

*"So satisfied that you decided to beat him up?"*

*A & MUW*

*Bane smiled and explained, "Victoria, I did not beat him up. I taught him a small lesson for being disobedient."*

*A small lesson... The way he said it sounds it has happened more than once. At that point, she could not help but retreat. "Would you treat me and Nicole like that? And Nathan?"*

*The calm expression on Bane's visage seemed to crack a little when he heard that. He went over to grab her shoulders, stopping her from retreating. "I would never do that!" He held her shoulders rather forcefully, saying, "Didn't I promise you? I will be a good father and husband. Even if I had to, I would rather hit myself than you, Nicole, or Nathan."*

However, Victoria refused to listen to a word he said. "You're a monster. Let go of me."  
"Victoria!" He explained, "Listen. I would rather die than hurt you or the children, and I would never let anyone harm any of you."

"Let go of me! You don't understand. We don't need your protection." She shoved him so hard that she took two steps back before steadying himself. His breath was ragged and gradually became somewhat unstable, seemingly angered by what she said.

A long while later, he adjusted his crooked glasses and seemed to have returned to normal when he looked at her. "Victoria, you're being emotional. Why don't you rest for today, and I'll look for you tonight?"

Then, he went away, leaving her alone. She released her breath after a long while. It was her fault that Ethan got hurt. It was only a slight touch, yet he was in so much pain that he stumbled backward. He had to be severely wounded!

During dinner, Victoria thought she would not see Ethan again but was surprised to see him standing beside Donald. Perhaps he felt her gaze, which was why he nodded at her as a greeting. "Miss Selwyn."

Before she could reciprocate, she heard Bane uttering. "Aren't you worried I might do something to him? From now on, he will appear before you every day. Does that lessen your worry?!"

Victoria said nothing.

"Alright. Sit down, and let's start dinner."

This meal was exceptionally silent. After their meal, she led the children upstairs and heard him thanking her softly when she passed by Ethan.

Chapter 399 Injured

*His voice was so soft that she might not have heard it if she paid less attention. At that instance, she thought she had misheard. She was afraid to look at him because she was worried Bane might notice something if she did.*

*Therefore, she pretended like nothing happened and headed upstairs.*

*Once she returned to her room, she had a hunch that Ethan might come to her again, and she was right. There was a knock on her door in the middle of the night, just two soft and quick knocks.*

*She felt her heart skip a beat as she approached the door and saw a piece of paper slip under the door. She quickly picked it up and shoved it in her pocket before opening the door. When she did, she could only catch Ethan's figure as he left. She then closed the door and locked it before looking at the paper.*

*A sentence was on it, and it made her heart race after carefully reading it. In the end, she entered the bathroom and soaked the paper in water before tearing it apart and flushing it down the toilet.*

146 Tu, E

*Chapter 400 How Will You Compensate Me?*

*Chapter 400*

*Summer had been staying at the place Alaric prepared for them for several days. She had no way of completing her tasks at work, and due to the complexity of this matter, she did not foresee how many days of vacation she needed. She even thought she could resign at this point. However, that was just... her alone.*

*The problem lay in that Erik was with her. With his position at the company, they might suffer huge losses if he did not return soon. It would be fine if she lost her job because Victoria was her best friend, but what about him? Besides the responsibility he had to*

*take on after discovering Victoria's kidnap, his task was considered done when Alaric came to pick them up.*

*However, it had been a long time since then, and he did not seem to be heading back any time soon. So, Summer decided to visit him.*

*Since they were living next door to each other, she heard his cold voice shortly after knocking. "Come in."*

*He did not open the door for me and asked me to enter? Feeling a little hesitant, she did not think twice and opened the door to enter the room. Once inside, she saw Erik sitting before his laptop with a pair of earphones, seeming to be in a meeting.*

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*At that, she immediately stopped walking. If she were to interrupt during a meeting, it would be rude. Just as she was about to slip away, she did not expect him to look away from his screen and catch her action. Then, he ordered, "Come over here,"*

*Summer immediately stopped and approached him after a moment's hesitation. Then, she saw him pointing at a spot, indicating for her to sit there.*

*Since he was her boss, she did not disobey and sat down. Once she did, she felt uneasy*

*being alone with him in the room, despite the ongoing meeting. Moreover, she was sitting opposite him, which made her feel somewhat uncomfortable.*

*At first, she maintained an upright posture but then gradually felt bored and decided to take out her phone to play games. She opened Candy Crush but forgot to silence her phone, so the game's background music began blaring as soon as she logged onto it.*

*Embarrassed, she frantically closed the application and looked toward Erik, precisely meeting his eyes. He gazed at her and spoke to his laptop screen, "I have some matters*

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*to deal with, so the meeting's adjourned. Clark, follow up with everything else."*

*Once he relayed all his instructions, he turned off the camera and closed his laptop.*

*Now that the room had quieted down, Summer showed him the game she opened and smiled sheepishly. "I'm sorry. I was... Did I disturb you? I didn't do it on purpose."*

*Chapter 400 How Will You Compensate Me?*

*"Were you bored?" he asked.*

*She shook her head. "No. I didn't know how long your meeting is, so I decided to play some games but forgot to put it on silent."*

*"Okay." He nodded. "Why were you looking for me?"*

*"About that... Actually, I was hoping to thank you for accompanying me here."*

*Her sudden appreciation surprised him, and he raised an eyebrow. "And?"*

*"And I meant to ask... It's been quite a while since we've been here, so aren't you going to return to the company?"*

*"Oh, I see. You want me to leave?"*

*3/6*

*Summer quickly waved her hand and denied, "No, of course not. But you must be busy, being company president and all. Plus, you've been staying here for several days. I'm just worried it might affect your work."*

*He was just having a meeting, which showed how much work he had to finish.*

*"Being a company's president..." After repeating that twice, Erik stayed silent for a moment before smiling. "Yes, you're right. I've put off quite a lot of work these days."*

*Chapter 400 How Will You Compensate Me?*

*"So, you're-*

*"So, how will you compensate me for that?"*

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*Dumfounded, Summer wondered how the tables had turned. She meant to say that he should return if he had a lot of work to do at the company. Who would have thought he would ask about compensation?*

*With that thought in mind, she asked, "I'm just a mere employee. What can I do to compensate you?"*

*Hearing that, Erik smiled.*

*"Are you sure you have nothing to compensate me with? How can you have so little confidence in yourself?"*

*That rendered her speechless. She pursed her lips while looking at him sternly, slowly having a strange feeling about this conversation. "Mr. Ludson, are you..."*

*With a raised eyebrow, he asked, "Am I what?"*

*"Are you looking to wait until this ends and I return to the company to exploit me even more? Or would you take away my year-end bonus? Fine. Although it sounds scary, you did help me this time, so I'll let you exploit me all you want."*

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*When she got to that, her expression had become indignant.*

*However, he felt at a loss for words. He rubbed his temples, sinking in the fact that someone was slow-witted. Forget it. Let's take it slow. He took off his earphones and changed the topic. "Is there still no news about your friend?"*

*"Nope." At the mention of that, Summer felt slightly worried again. "I thought Alano would be reliable. He had a general direction but still couldn't find anything. It's so*



*frustrating.”*

*“Searching for someone requires time, and even if they found her, they can’t act rashly. They need to come up with a plan.”*

*Hearing that, she was taken aback and stared at Erik in surprise. “Mr. Ludson, are you saying Alaric might’ve found Victoria and is just trying to devise a plan?”*

*He shook his head. “No. That’s just my guess.”*

*She fell silent and became devastated again. Oh, well...*

*After receiving Ethan’s note last night and destroying the evidence, Victoria found her heart abnormally frantic since waking up. She maintained the routine of bringing her*

*Chapter 400 How Will You Compensana Ma*

*children downstairs to have their meals, and they continued to ignore Bane’s words.*

*Similarly, he allowed them to do whatever they wanted.*

*Just as she finished her breakfast and was ready to head upstairs, she heard Bane call her. “Victoria.”*

*It was the first time he had spoken to her during breakfast, so she looked at him.*

*“What?”*

*Although her attitude was not the nicest, he did not care and maintained his smile. ‘I need to head out after breakfast. You and the children must stay home. Call Donald if you need anything.’*

*When she heard that, she squinted and sneered, rebuking, “Stay home? Did you forget that you have us confined in this house? Where am I supposed to go?”*

*The smile on his face did not disappear. “Don’t be mad, Victoria. The door will be open to you once you come around.”*

*“Really?” She sneered. “Then, I’m afraid I might never have the chance to exit that door.”*

