

Departure with a Belly Chapter 211

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Chapter 212

“Victoria?”

Fiona searched almost every corner of the house but couldn't find Victorial anywhere.

“Where is she?”

In the end, Fiona had no choice but to return to the living room, where she saw.

Alaric standing, surveying the room. She hesitantly commented, “I'm sorry, Mr.

Cadogan. It seems like my friend isn't home. I'm not sure if she went out.”

She then changed the subject. “How about you take a seat first? I'll give her a call and see what she's up to.”

“Alright.”

Fiona thought he would decline, but to her surprise, Alaric sat down on the couch in a manner that suggested he had all the time in the world to wait.

She immediately ran to the balcony to call Victoria.

“Victoria, where are you?”

P

1/9

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“Are you home?” Victoria, who received her call, instinctively asked in response.

“Yeah. I just got home, but I don’t see you here.”

2/9

After hearing that her friend was already home, Victoria breathed a sigh of relief and explained, “I had something to take care of. If you’re okay, just stay at home and wait for me. I have something to talk to you about when I get back.”

“Sure, and I have something to tell you too. You-”

“Is it Fiona?” Bane’s voice suddenly came through from the other end of the line.

“Mhm. She’s home now.”

“That’s good.”

Fiona initially intended to tell Victoria that Alaric was currently at their place to apologize to Victoria and that they should have dinner together.

But after hearing Bane’s voice, Fiona immediately swallowed the words about to leave her lips.

She wouldn’t be so ignorant as to not adapt now that she knew Victoria was with Bane.

Chapter 212 What Is He Afraid Of?

And so, she quickly changed the topic.

“Be careful outside, both of you.”

Victoria must have been concerned as she reminded Fiona not to wander around.

before they finally ended the call.

Listening to the busy tone on her phone, Fiona took a deep breath as the corners of her lips lifted into a smile. It seems like only Mr. Cadogan and I will be having lunch together.

With these thoughts in mind, she put away her phone and went back to find Alaric still sitting in the same spot, maintaining his original posture.

As soon as she entered, his gaze fell straight on her.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Cadogan. My friend went out to deal with something. It looks like it will only be you and me for lunch-”

“Where did she go?” Alaric’s cold voice interrupted her abruptly.

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Fiona hesitated for a moment. “I... I’m not sure. She only told me she had something to take care of.”

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This can’t be a coincidence, right? Upset, Alaric pulled his eyebrows together. Did she really leave right when I got here? Did she know was coming and deliberately avoided me, or was it unintentional?

Considering this, Alaric asked in a cold tone, “Did she know I was coming?”

Fiona shook her head in confusion. “Nope. I was planning to tell her when she got here.”

Since Victoria doesn't know, it's probably a misunderstanding.

Seeing him fall silent, Fiona asked, "Is something the matter, Mr. Cadogan?"

Alaric sneered upon hearing her question. "Nothing. I was just in a hurry to see her."

Those words caused a slight change in Fiona's expression and gaze.

"Mr. Cadogan, you..."

Alaric raised an eyebrow. "What? Is there a problem with wanting to apologize as soon as possible?"

"No problem! Of course not," she replied.

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Chapter 212 What Is He Afraid of?

That subtle hint of emotion vanished.

Mr. Cadogan sure is nice. As expected of the man I have my eyes on.

And so, Fiona became even more determined to win his heart.

After ending the call, Victoria put her phone back into her pocket. Nicole, who was beside her, immediately took advantage of the opportunity to climb onto her lap.

"Mommy, huggie!"

Before Victoria could react, Nicole was suddenly scooped up by a sturdy hand. Bane had lifted her onto his lap.

Although Nicole didn't end up in her mother's embrace as she had wished, she didn't

mind Bane's familiar embrace. She even snuggled into his arms as she asked in her incredibly tender voice, "Mr. Bane, can I sleep in your arms?"

Bane reached out and lightly tapped the girl's small and delicate nose.

"Go ahead. When have I ever refused you?"

5/9

Chapter 212 What is He Afraid Of?

"Thank you, Mr. Bane."

Something seemed to come to Bane's mind when he turned his head and looked at Nathan sitting beside him.

"Want to come over too, Nathan?"

Nathan sat there, looking somewhat reserved because he didn't smile or whine like a cute child would.

In response to Bane's invitation, Nathan politely thanked him before declining.

"Thank you, Mr. Bane, but it's not necessary."

Bane lamented, "You are always so distant from me, Nathan."

Before Nathan could think of an answer himself, Victoria spoke up on his behalf.

"You know that he's more introverted.

"Also, you already have Nicole clinging to you. Is that not enough?"

Having one clingy child was already exhausting as it was.

To her surprise, Bane smiled upon hearing her words. "Definitely not. After all, you

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know that I hope all three of you will stick to me.”

While Victoria didn't say anything, Nathan, who sat beside them, glanced at his mother.

He then heard her say, “Only children cling to people.”

“Mhm. You can act like a child in front of me.”

Fine! I understand now, Victoria thought.

Bane hasn't been able to control himself from talking more from the moment he returned to the country. Just what is he afraid of? Does he think that I will turn back now when it has been five years since then?

With these thoughts in mind, Victoria somewhat helplessly glanced at Bane.

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She had initially wanted to ask the man if it was really necessary for him to speak to her like this.

But thinking about how the two children were present, Victoria had to hold back her words and ultimately said nothing.

Bane seemed to understand what she was thinking, and he changed to a different

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topic instead of continuing with what they were talking about.

“So, you are planning to live with Fiona over there?”

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“Yeap. She has been renting it for quite a long time. I’ll probably be staying there.”

“Will you still live there if the company is going to be located somewhere far away?”

Victoria became somewhat conflicted upon hearing this.

Indeed, her company’s location was quite far from Fiona’s place.

Previously, Fiona only knew that Victoria was going to start a company without knowing the specific location. Victoria also hadn’t expected Fiona to rent a house for her.

“The beginning stage of starting a company is going to be hectic. Commuting will be troublesome if it’s too far away.”

“Right. I know.” Victoria nodded.

However, since her busy schedule hadn’t started yet, she would figure out how to handle the issue only after she got into it.

8/9

Sane only passed her a set of keys. “Take this.”

41

When Victoria didn’t take it, he added, “I prepared this from way back. It’s close to the location where you’re going to open the company, and someone will clean up

the place regularly. You can stay there if you end up working late.”

Seeing that Victoria still didn't take the keys, Bane simply handed them to Nicole.

“Nicole, if you don't want your Mommy to be tired, will you accept this set of keys from me on her behalf?”

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Chapter 213 Rely on Me More

cagain.

“Mr. Bane holds you and takes pictures of you to help you, no?”

Nicole blinked and countered, “But Mommy, I didn’t ask Mr. Bane to help me.

Besides, Mr. Bane likes you, right? I saw on TV that a boy has to show sincerity when he is pursuing a girl. How can he win someone over otherwise?”

Even though Nicole was young, she had gone straight to the point and cleverly exposed the complexities of relationships between men and women.

Eventually, Victoria was also persuaded.

Even so, she decided that she would have to talk to Nicole later when they returned home after seeing the girl take the keys from Bane.

2/8

Chapter 213 Daly on Me Mo

After all, Victoria couldn’t possibly accept something as valuable as a house!

And if she had to take it, she would insist on paying for it.

She already owed Bane too much.

There was no further conversation in the car. When the driver arrived at their destination, he turned his head and announced, “Mr. Morison, Miss Selwyn, we have arrived,”

The car had come to a stop in front of a private school.

“This is the best private school in Jasea. If the young master and young miss wish to go to a school, this is the optimal choice.”

“Alright. Thank you for bringing us here. We’ll get off and take a look.”

As they got out of the car, the two children warmly bid the driver farewell.

Victoria had originally planned to look for a school for the two children. In fact, she had previously researched this private school. Since it was close to her company, it would be convenient for her to pick up the children.

Bane also got out of the car with her.

F

Character Rely on Me More

“Ethan has been working here for many years and is familiar with Jasea. He says this school has the best reputation, so you can rest assured about letting Nicole and Nathan study here.”

“Alright. Thank you.”

“Why are you thanking me?” Bane chuckled helplessly. “Wasn’t this school on your list of considerations? If you want to thank me, *you* should be thanking me for accompanying you on this trip. I didn’t help with anything else.”

Bane tried his best to integrate himself into her life, but Victoria was too independent.

She had already taken care of most things herself.

He used to admire how determined she was and how she never gave up, but over time, he found himself wishing she would be softer and rely on him more.

That way, he could feel needed.

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4/8

Chapter 213 Rely on Me More

They were then taken to the classrooms for an inspection.

Having seen everything, Victoria was quite satisfied with the school.

3

The atmosphere during the children's classes was pleasant. Not only did the teachers speak softly, but the children cooperated well. Overall, everything was good.

5/8

After the tour, Victoria didn't make an immediate decision. She simply said she would consider it and get back to them.

The school representative quickly agreed and provided her with their contact information.

"Our school offers transportation services, but there's something I need to mention

in advance. Some parents are not comfortable with their children traveling together in one vehicle, so they either personally come to pick them up or have their own drivers take the children home.”

“I understand your point. Thank you. I will think it over.”

“Sure. Take care, then. Goodbye, little ones!”

Chapter 213 Rely on Me More

When they got in the car, Bane asked her, “What do you think?”

a

“This seems like a decent school, but I want to check out some other places.”

“Okay. I’ll go with you.”

44

6/8

Afterward, Victoria and Bane went to see two or three nearby schools, but the results were somewhat disappointing. Some lacked cleanliness, while others fell short in terms of their meal preparations.

In the end, Nicole was so tired she fell asleep in Bane’s arms.

While Victoria watched the girl asleep, she realized they had covered quite a lot of ground today. She stopped walking and looked at Nathan beside her.

“Nathan, are you tired?”

Nathan was considerate and obedient. Despite being tired after the long journey, he forced himself to appear energetic and replied, “I’m not, Mommy.”

Hearing that, Victoria bent down and picked him up.

“Mommy...”

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Chapter 213 Rely on Me More

“Yes, Mommy is tired, so hurry up and let Mommy hold you.”

Nathan couldn't utter a reply at that.

“Alright, now. We're not far from home. Let Mommy carry you.”

Nathan didn't struggle anymore.

He gently rested his head against Victoria's chest. He could still open his eyes and

say a few words to her at first, but as time went on, he gradually grew silent.

When Victoria was near the door, she realized that the child in her arms had fallen asleep.

Looking at his peaceful expression, Victoria couldn't help but reach out and pinch his tiny nose. She then quietly mused, “You fell asleep so quickly even though you said you were not tired.”

Nathan, who felt the pinch, made a muffled sound and nestled closer to her chest.

Victoria was immediately caught off guard and almost dropped him.

Luckily, she was quick to react as she held him in a secure hold.

7/8

Bane was beside her when he saw this. He couldn't help but offer, “Let me hold him.”

12 49 Sat, 24

Chapter 213 Rely on Me More

Victoria was somewhat surprised to hear that. “Is holding one not enough?”

“What?” Bane raised an eyebrow and smiled at her. “Think I can't handle two?”

He was still speaking when he took Nathan from her arms.

“But it's inconvenient to hold both by yourself,” Victoria insisted.

“I’m strong. This is nothing.”

Both children slept peacefully in his arms. Even the usually sensitive Nathan didn’t wake up when Bane took him.

The boy must have been exhausted.

Instead of refusing, Victoria followed Bane as they walked ahead.

The man was probably thinking about something. When they were near the car, he couldn’t help bringing up something as the children were asleep. “I just want to do a little more for you, Victoria. There’s no need to be in such a hurry to reject me. Give me more chances to prove myself. Maybe, if you give me a little more time, you’ll find that I’m not so bad after all.”

Chapter 214

Such humble words...

B

Despite not being the first time Victoria heard those words from Bane, she still felt a pang in her heart each time he said them.

If she was honest, Bane was truly good to her. There probably wouldn’t be another person in this world who would treat her so well.

Her heart wasn’t made of stone. Over the years, she had witnessed his kindness toward her, and if she didn’t have two children of her own, perhaps she would truly choose to be with him.

However, Victoria came from a single-parent family, and she had very little to offer her children. She couldn’t possibly spare any more energy for a romantic relationship.

Or rather, she couldn’t divert the energy she spent on her babies to someone else.

At the thought of this, Victoria could only inwardly sigh.

She finally chose to be clear with Bane.

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C

Chapter 214 She's Just Worried About You

"You're a good man, Bane. You've always been good to me. But... I can't keep accepting your kindness without giving any response in return."

When Bane heard that, he smiled softly and replied, "Give me a response, then. Victoria, I don't ask for much."

2/8

When he noticed her silence, he continued, "You can try me if you don't believe me. I won't give you pressure if you choose to be with me. I'll take good care of you and the children."

"I can't." Victoria shook her head. "I simply can't spare any effort on you."

"Who told you to do that? You'll still be yourself if you're with me. You can do whatever you want. However, I'll be right behind you, supporting you through everything."

"You..."

"What? This won't do too?" Bane thought seriously for a moment and suggested, "How about we give it a go? Three months. I'm sure you can figure out whether it's nice being with me within three months. What do you say?"

"Bane." Victoria bit her lower lip as she mumbled, "Please don't do this."

12:50 Sat, 24 Ju

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Chapter 214 She's Just Womed About You

Seeing her reaction, Bane commented, "You are still refusing me even though I've said so much. Alright, then. I'll just try harder."

The driver then came over and opened the door. When Bane bent over and carried the children into the car, Victoria hurried over and assisted him.

They were on the way home when the children woke up. The first thing Nicole said after she woke up was that she was hungry.

Victoria held her daughter in her arms and whispered, "We'll be home soon. Sleep a little longer. I'll wake you up when we're there."

Dazedly, Nicole leaned against Victoria's lap and fell asleep again.

Fiona leaned against the railing of the balcony as twilight merged into total darkness and the lights lit up. Eventually, she saw the familiar vehicle returning.

Her gloomy mood instantly brightened upon seeing that car.

In no time, she turned around and rushed downstairs to open the door while waiting for Victoria and the others to come in.

3/8

Chapter 214 She's Just Worried About You

"Victoria, you're finally back! I didn't expect you to be gone for the whole day. Did you go on a date with Bane?"

4/2

Her use of the word amused Bane, who smiled and drawled, "You can say that."

Victoria could only awkwardly explain from beside him. "We went to visit a few schools for Nicole and Nathan today."

“Schools? Have you decided on one? Oh my!” Fiona instinctively held her head, her expression bitter. “I totally forgot about such an important matter. I’m sorry, Victoria. I should have gone with you today.”

“It’s okay. It’s fine if you don’t go. It’s not a big deal.”

Although Victoria said it was okay, Fiona still blamed herself. After all, they were best friends, and she had missed such an important event because of a man.

Victoria proceeded to take the children inside to change into comfortable clothes.

After she left, Bane discreetly glanced at Fiona.

“How was your day today?”

Bane initiating the conversation caught Fiona off guard.

Chapter 214 She’s Just Worried About You

“What?”

Seeing the confused look on her face, Bane had to remind her.

“Last night,” he uttered.

Fiona’s face dimmed when she heard that. “How did you know about last night? Did Victoria tell you?”

5/8

Fiona’s expression turned dark as she thought about Bane knowing that she had gone to a man’s room last night. She couldn’t help but get angry as she continued to complain, “What’s wrong with her? I already told her that even though we live together, we’re still free to do our own things and we shouldn’t interfere with each other. Why did she tell you about my business?”

The resentment in Fiona’s words made Bane pause. He hadn’t expected that his probing would cause trouble for Victoria.

Still...

Thinking about how Fiona would continue to get entangled with Alaric, he couldn't allow Victoria and Fiona to live together in this place.

Chapter 214 She's Just Worried About You

He was sure that something bad would happen.

With this in mind, Bane had a sharp glint flicker in his eyes behind the gold-framed glasses.

He looked at Fiona, who was grumbling in front of him, and his lips curled in a subtle, mocking smile. "Fiona, you're roommates. She's just worried about you when you sneak out in the middle of the night."

Fiona grabbed her head, her expression conflicted as she muttered, "Of course I know she's worried about me. But I'm an adult now and I have my own thoughts. Couldn't she just send me a text if she's worried? Why did she have to tell someone else about it?"

Bane pursed his lips and casually mentioned, "It seems like I haven't left a good impression on you."

When Fiona heard this, she belatedly realized that her previous words were likely offensive to Bane.

She quickly snapped back to her senses and apologized. "I'm sorry! I didn't mean to blame you. I just... I just want a little freedom."

6/8

Chapter 214 She's Just Worred About You

"When you're living together, there are many things to consider." Bane added thoughtfully, "If you still plan to stay in contact with that person in the future, it

would be best if you didn't live with her. Otherwise, incidents like today will happen again.”

Fiona fell silent at those words.

She knew he was right. She was happy to live with Victoria at first, but there was some sort of tension now.

She had a feeling that she would have a mental breakdown if Victoria started to interfere with her life. If they ended up arguing, it might even affect their friendship.

Just as Fiona was entangled in her thoughts, Victoria returned.

When she saw that Bane was still here, she asked, “I'm going to prepare dinner now.

Would you like to join us?”

Bane was just about to agree to it when his phone rang.

He ended up stepping out to take the call.

By the time he returned, five minutes had passed.

7/2

Chapter 214 She's Just Worried About You

“I'm sorry, but something came up. I have to leave now,” Bane said to Victoria, who was busy in the kitchen.

Victoria was understanding. “It's alright. Go do your thing.”

Bane often had to leave for work during their time abroad, which was why Victoria had gotten used to it.

“Alright. Let me know if you need anything.”

He was gone immediately after that.

After he left, Victoria called Fiona into the kitchen.

“Did you have something to tell me when you called me this morning?”

Chapter 215

Fiona's expression changed.

44

I was going to tell Victoria about Mr. Cadogan wanting to come and apologize, but...

After hearing what Bane said, Fiona felt she didn't need to tell Victoria about it any longer.

Thus, she simply chuckled awkwardly and stammered, "I-It's nothing."

Victoria looked puzzled. "But you called me up when you came back and said you had something to tell me, right?"

"Yes, that's right." Fiona was a little flustered as she explained, "I was emotional at the time and wanted to talk to *you* about something, but I don't need to anymore."

Victoria raised her eyebrows. "Is that so?"

Fiona fervently nodded.

Despite their relatively short acquaintance, Victoria still thought she understood Fiona fairly well. She can't hide it when she's lying. Her eyes will flicker around, and she will bob her head up and down like a chicken every time she does.

Chapter 215 Leaving

Thus, Victoria could immediately tell that Fiona was lying.

She probably doesn't want to tell me about it anymore. Victoria sighed to herself and decided not to press any further.

“I see. I’ll drop it then.”

Fiona nodded away again.

Victoria tied the apron around her and got ready to slice up the meat. Fiona felt bad and quickly offered, “I’ll help you.”

Ordinarily, Victoria would readily hand over the knife. This time, she knew what she was going to say next, so she didn’t hand the knife over. “I’ll do it.”

“Okay then.” Fiona stood beside Victoria and watched a little dispiritedly.

Victoria’s eyes flickered with thought. After mentally preparing what she was going to say, she piped up, “How did it go? Did you get his number?”

As soon as Victoria mentioned this, Fiona recalled what she told Bane and her expression soured a little.

The look on Fiona’s face made Victoria assume that she had failed.

28

R

Chapter 215 Leaving

Victoria secretly sighed in relief. In her opinion, this outcome wasn’t all that bad. At least, she would not have to put in any more effort later on.

3/8

With that thought in mind, Victoria continued quietly, “This morning, I told you I wanted to talk to you about something, right? It actually has something to do with

him. You-

“Victoria!” Fiona’s head shot up and she cried out Victoria’s name.

“You went out with Bane today, right? He’s so good to you. He prepared a house for you to stay in now that you’re back in the country, right? Wouldn’t it affect your relationship if I keep you here?”

I

Victoria stopped cutting the meat. She turned around and eyed Fiona in silence.

Fiona sheepishly averted her eyes and chuckled awkwardly. “D–Don’t take it the wrong way. I’m just worried that I might end up affecting your future, so I just wanted to create more opportunities for you two. I’m also afraid that Bane might one day say that I’m the reason why he failed to get together with you, so that’s why...”

Her voice got progressively softer until she was speaking barely above a mumble.

Chapter 215 Leaving

There were no fools here.

B

Naturally, Victoria understood what Fiona’s words implied. She stared at Fiona in silence for quite some time before she finally said, “You can wait outside. The *food* will be ready soon.”

Fiona didn’t know what to say, so she turned around and shuffled out of the kitchen.

During dinner, the two children sensed that something was amiss. Although Nicole usually failed to pick up such things, she too noticed the awkward silence.

The children exchanged glances and quietly tucked into their food.

Once they were done, they set their cutlery down in unison. "We've finished, Mommy, Miss Fiona."

Fiona forced herself to smile weakly at the children.

Victoria looked at them and stroked their heads. "Nathan and Nicole, you two have been very good today. Head back to your room to rest for a while and then start packing your things, okay?"

Fiona paled and bit her lip.

4/8

44

Chapter 215 Leaving

The two children immediately looked up at Victoria. They didn't expect things to be this serious.

5/8

However, at the very next moment, Victoria smiled and said, "You'll be starting at your new school tomorrow."

At this, the children relaxed and left to pack their things.

Once they were gone, Victoria carried on finishing her food.

Meanwhile, Fiona looked despondent ever since she heard Victoria telling the children to pack their things. She only snapped out of her reverie when Victoria stood up to clear the table, and she quickly apologized. "I'm sorry, Victoria."

Victoria gave her a faint smile. "It's fine. You were just trying to be considerate of

1. me. I'll find the time to talk to Bane."

Truth be told, as soon as the words came out of Fiona's mouth, she started regretting it. Alas, now that she heard Victoria saying she was going to talk to Bane, she couldn't take back her words anymore, so she simply stayed quiet.

After clearing the table, Victoria cleaned up the kitchen and threw out the trash.

-Once she was certain that the house was spotless, she went back to her room to

Chapter 215 Leaving

pack.

EΞ

They had only just moved in so there was not much for her to pack. Soon, she was done. She then sat down on the bed and took out her phone to book a hotel.

Once the booking was made, Nathan came over.

"Mommy."

Victoria put away her phone and smiled at him. "Have you packed your things, Nathan?"

"Yes, Mommy."

“Good. What about Nicole?”

“Nicole’s ready too. She’s in the room waiting for you.”

“Okay. Let’s go then.” Victoria got up and dragged her suitcase to the door.

On the way out, she ran into Fiona who came to look for her.

Fiona seemed hesitant. “Are you leaving?”

6/8

Chapter 215 Leaving

“Yeah. We’ll stay somewhere near the school tonight so that we can make it to school on time tomorrow.”

Victoria didn’t seem angry, but that only made Fiona feel worse about it.

“I’ll give you a ride then.”

“It’s fine. That won’t be necessary. I’ve already booked us a ride.”

“Oh... Okay. Stay safe. Let me know when you get there.”

“Alright.” Victoria nudged Nathan. “Tell Nicole to come out, Nathan. We’re leaving.”

“Yes, Mommy

Victoria watched as Nathan entered the room, and once he disappeared behind the door, she turned to Fiona and said quietly, “Fiona, I know you might not like what I’m about to say, but as your friend, I want to remind you anyway. Before you develop feelings for someone, you should first check and see if he’s single. Don’t get into a situation where you’ll only end up hurting yourself. That’s all I have to say. I’ll get

going now.”

She didn't bother to check Fiona's reaction. She simply smiled and dragged her

7.9

Chapter 215 Leaving

suitcase over to Nathan and Nicole.

E

As they were leaving, the children cheerfully said their goodbyes to Fiona, who could only wave back to them with a melancholic smile.

Thud. The door closed, and Fiona was the only one left inside the house.

All was still and silent. It was as if no one had come over in the first place.

[E]

Chapter 216

It was still fairly early when the family of three arrived at the hotel. Victoria got them a suite for two weeks.

Once they were all checked in, the hotel concierge brought them up to the suite.

“The suite you booked comes with an outdoor pool, ma'am, but it's winter so the pool area is closed right now. Since you have two children with you, it's best if you keep it closed too.”

“Alright.” Victoria nodded gratefully in response to the person's kind reminder. “I got

1. it. Thank you.”

The hotel suite was excellent. There was even a faint scent of potpourri and no hint of mustiness.

The hotel staff gave the suite a thorough check, including the pool area, and only left once he confirmed everything was fine.

Victoria swiftly unpacked their necessities and the two children followed suit. They only stopped when she did.

Then, they splayed out across her legs and looked up at her.

1/9

Chapter 216 Turning Grim

“Mommy, did you and Miss Fiona have a fight?”

Victoria didn’t want the children to know about the disagreements between the adults, so she came up with an excuse.

“We’re not fighting, Nicole, but Fiona needs some time alone right now. It’s the same with you and Nathan sleeping in separate rooms. Understand?”

Nicole cocked her head to the side and said, “But, when we were staying there, you and Miss Fiona didn’t sleep together.”

“That’s right. We didn’t sleep together. However, Fiona is renting the place and she refused to let us pay her rent. In that case, we can’t possibly take advantage of her by staying there, right?”

At last, Nicole nodded approvingly.

“That makes sense.”

On the other hand, Nathan remained quiet.

He and Nicole had different personalities, and he was a far more pensive person.

Victoria could only softly explain, “Don’t think too much. Either way, you’re going to

2/9

Chapter 216 Turning Grim

follow me no matter where I go, right? In that case, all you need to do is stick with me.”

Once the children went to sleep, Victoria opened her laptop to prepare a plan. They couldn't stay in the hotel forever, and if she wanted to rent a place, she would need to find one near the company. Thus, she began to search for properties. Soon after that, she looked at listings for live-in maids.

Thankfully, the children would be in school during the day. That gave her enough time to prepare everything.

Victoria stayed up late and tapped away at her laptop until she finally fell asleep at the table.

The next day, she was woken up by the ringing of her phone.

Her mind was still a blur as she answered the call.

“Hello?”

Her voice was so hoarse that even she got a shock.

“Victoria?” Bane called out in concern.

3/9

Q

44

Chapter 216 Turning Grim

Victoria covered the microphone and cleared her throat before speaking up again.

“It's me.”

Nevertheless, her voice was still hoarse. She wasn't sure if she had caught a cold.

“What's wrong?”

“I'm fine. Maybe I had too much spicy food last night.”

4/9

Bane was silent for a moment. "I'm at the door right now. I brought you breakfast, but I don't have the password to the house."

Victoria was speechless.

Half an hour later, she opened the door to her hotel suite and let Bane in.

The breakfast Bane brought was stone cold by now. As soon as he entered, he looked around the suite, but once he saw how pale Victoria was, his face turned grim.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"It's not a big deal. I didn't see the need to go into detail."

3

Chapter 216 Turning Grim

Bane paused for a second before asking, "Why didn't you stay at the place I prepared for you then? Nicole has the keys."

"Well, Nicole took it. Not me."

"Victoria..."

5/9

"Let me see what you bought." Victoria took the food from him. It had gone cold, so she took it to the kitchen to reheat it..

Bane's eyes darkened as he watched her leave.

He was partly the reason why she moved into a hotel at night.

However, he didn't expect her to move so soon. She didn't even tell me anything.

When will she let me into her heart?

Fiona didn't sleep well.

It was nearly dawn before she finally dozed off, but she woke up just a few short hours later.

Chapter 216 Turning Grim

She was preoccupied with the lunch appointment today.

It all seemed strange to her. I still can't believe that man, Mr. Cadogan, asked for my number and extended a lunch invitation.

He left once she promised she would bring Victoria with her.

However, she couldn't bring Victoria over today. I'll need to think of an explanation to give him later.

Evidently, Fiona had forgotten everything Victoria said to her yesterday.

By the time she showered and dolled herself up, it was nearly time for lunch. She headed straight for the restaurant.

It was a classy restaurant. She and her friends had a meal here a few times.

After informing the restaurant host that she was meeting someone, a server led her to a private room upstairs.

"This way please, miss."

When the server opened the door, Fiona was surprised to see the handsome and aloof man who was already seated inside.

6/9

Chapter 216 Turning Grim

She instinctively checked the time.

A

Fiona placed a lot of importance on this appointment and had purposely left the house early to avoid getting stuck in traffic or to have some buffer time in case she

ran into unexpected situations. She was afraid of making him displeased in any way. lest he refused to have anything to do with her anymore.

Therefore, she did not expect him to be even earlier than her when she had already left the house half an hour early.

It was still twenty minutes before their agreed-upon meeting time.

Fiona became even more attracted to him.

“Hi, Mr. Cadogan. I didn’t expect you to be this early.”

Fiona greeted him warmly.

However, his eyes weren’t on her. He kept looking behind her, but after a few moments, he still didn’t see the person he was looking for.

Alaric’s expression soured. “Where is she?” he asked grimly.

7/9

Fiona knew he would ask this question and had prepared her answer ahead of time.

Chapter 216 Turning Grim

“I’m sorry, Mr. Cadogan, but my friend can’t make it. She has other matters to attend to, but don’t worry. I conveyed your message to her last night and she has forgiven you.”

Fiona had no choice but to say this for now.

However, she didn’t expect the man in front of her to narrow his eyes dangerously at her.

“She has forgiven me? Did she say those words herself?”

His gaze was sharp and piercing.

Fiona could barely keep the act up.

“T–That’s right.”

“Hah.”

The man looked at Fiona and scoffed mockingly before withdrawing his gaze and getting up to leave.

Fiona was left standing all alone in the room.

8/9

Chapter 216 Turning Grim

What just happened?

Chapter 217

Alaric walked out of the restaurant with a stormy expression.

He thought he could use Fiona to bring Victoria over, but...

After seeing the way Fiona's eyes flickered, he figured that she probably didn't even tell Victoria what he said.

Alaric got his phone out and made a call. “Look into someone for me.”

By the time Fiona reacted and ran out after Alaric, he was already nowhere to be seen.

She took her phone out and called him.

The call rang for a while before he finally answered.

“What happened back there, Mr. Cadogan? Are you upset because my friend didn't show up? I'm sorry. I didn't mean to lie to you, but my friend moved out with her boyfriend last night. Since her boyfriend was there, I couldn't possibly bring up your
Before she finished her sentence, she heard the loud screeching sound of someone slamming on the brakes and she jumped in fright.

“Mr. Cadogan?! Are you alright, Mr. Cadogan?”

All was silent for quite some time until Alaric gritted his teeth and repeated icily,

“Her boyfriend?”

Fiona was still startled. She instinctively nodded.

“Y–Yes. Her boyfriend...”

Click.

•

The dial tone made Fiona realize the call had been cut off.

She stood frozen with her phone in hand as she thought about Alaric’s reaction, including the way he left after seeing that she came alone.

After connecting the dots between everything, she finally caught on.

All the color drained from her face.

“Achoo!”

As soon as Victoria sneezed, Bane immediately offered her his handkerchief.

“It’s fine.” Victoria rejected his offer and sniffed before she carried on walking.

The property agent continued, “Miss Selwyn, the house that you’re about to see has a south–facing floor–to–ceiling window. You can open up the curtains every day and have an excellent view of the surroundings. It also has three bedrooms which you asked for, as well as a study. This property is the one that fits your needs the most so far, but...”

He paused without finishing his sentence.

After all, he wasn’t certain whether she liked the place or not yet.

Victoria took a look around and was very satisfied with the house. It was in a good location too as it was near both the children’s school and her company.

“What’s the rental for this place?”

“Do you like it, Miss Selwyn?” The property agent sounded a little taken aback. He

probably didn't expect her to choose this house.

"Yeah. I think it's pretty good."

"I agree, but..."

Noting his hesitation, Victoria asked, "What's the matter? Is there a problem with the landlord?"

"Not quite, but apparently the landlord is abroad. We haven't been able to get in touch with her."

"

The landlord's abroad? Can't get in touch with her?

"Did she not give you her contact information?"

"We had her phone number but it's out of service. We don't have her new one."

Victoria sighed in pity. "I guess we'll have to look at other places then."

"I'll show you a few other places."

The property agent scratched his head sheepishly. "Actually, it's not just this building. All of the properties over here belong to that landlord, but we haven't been able to get in touch with her all this while."

"Are you saying that the houses have been empty the whole time?"

"Yes. I heard that it belonged to some president of a major corporation, but **he** gave all the properties to his ex-wife after the divorce."

Victoria became a little sentimental. Not many men would be that thoughtful toward their ex-wife.

Meanwhile, after hearing everything, Bane got a strange feeling.

"By the way, Miss Selwyn, you share a connection with the ex-wife."

"A connection?"

How did she have a connection with the landlord?

Victoria chuckled and mused, "Is it going to enable me to rent her place?"

"Perhaps it might. Who knows how fate works? You and the landlord share the same last name, Miss Selwyn."

"She's a Selwyn too?"

"That's right. I heard that she's a young and beautiful woman too."

Victoria was a little taken aback. For some reason, what she just heard gave her an odd feeling.

Nevertheless, she didn't think much of it.

They got into the elevator and headed back down. On their way out, they ran into a middle-aged man in a suit who seemed to be the property agent's superior.

The man's expression darkened as soon as he saw the property agent.

"Isaac! Why are you showing a client these properties again? How many times have I told you not to bring them over here? Even if they like it, they still can't rent the place! Are you trying to give me a heart attack?" The middle-aged man reprimanded the property agent.

Once he was done, he turned to Victoria and Bane. "So sorry about that. He loves the properties here so he keeps bringing clients over to check the place out, but I'm

afraid we can't rent out any of the properties here for now. I'm sure he has informed you of the reason."

Victoria nodded. "Yes. I heard about it."

"Give me a break, boss. Miss Selwyn here has a connection with the landlord, you know. They're both Selwyns and she just came back to the country too."

"I see. Is she planning on settling down? You should show her the properties on the southeast side."

"Oh, right. Why did I forget about that place? Let me take you over there, Miss Selwyn."

"Thanks."

Victoria went to see the property.

ww

While she wasn't as satisfied with this one, the interior design was to her liking, so after thinking about it for a while, she decided to take it.

"The landlord wants a deposit of six months' rent, Miss Selwyn. Is that alright with you?"

"It works for me. However, I'm quite busy right now and I'll need a few days to prepare for the move."

"That's no problem at all. I'll get started on the rental agreement. All you need to do is leave a deposit and I'll reserve the property for you."

"Thank you."

While preparing the rental agreement, the property agent asked Victoria for her ID.

She gave him her social security card.

After taking a look at it, the staff's expression became a little peculiar. Instead of filling out the documentation, he showed her ID to the other employees.

All of them turned to her.

Victoria was confused. Is there something wrong with my ID? They can't be suspecting me of identity theft, right?

She was just about to ask them about it when the property agent rushed back over to her.

"M-Miss Selwyn, is this your ID?"

He was stammering and staring at Victoria in shock.

"Is this your name?"

Victoria was dumbfounded.

She didn't know what was going on, but she looked at him and answered, "Since it's my ID, of course the name is mine."

Upon hearing her confirmation, the property agent held out her ID respectfully.

"M-Miss Selwyn, did you come over today to inspect the properties?"

Huh?

Chapter 218

What did he say? Victoria thought she misheard him.

Why is he suddenly talking to me like I'm his boss? What does he mean by inspecting the properties?

Victoria was puzzled by the property agent's respectful demeanor. All of a sudden,

she recalled what he said about a rich man giving the properties to his ex-wife.
Her expression stiffened ever so slightly.

He couldn't possibly be referring to Alaric and me, right? The ex-wife is also a Selwyn who left the country and couldn't be reached.

It can't be that much of a coincidence, especially now that they've seen my ID and are treating me like I'm their boss.

Although Victoria could scarcely believe it, she looked at the property agent and asked in all seriousness, "You said you couldn't get in touch with the landlord. Can you let me see the phone number you have?"

The property agent looked a little confused.

Chapter 218

What did he say? Victoria thought she misheard him.

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Although Victoria could scarcely believe it, she looked at the property agent and asked in all seriousness, "You said you couldn't get in touch with the landlord. Can you let me see the phone number you have?"

The property agent looked a little confused.

“Huh? Aren’t you the landlord, Miss Selwyn?”

That being said, he still retrieved the phone number and passed it to Victoria.

Victoria checked the number. It was indeed her old number. Plus, according to the other documentation, the properties belonged *to someone* named Victoria Selwyn.

It was all hers...

Victoria froze in shock.

It took her a while to snap out of it.

At the time, she didn’t want to take anything. Once the divorce was finalized, she left everything behind and took nothing with her.

He had lent her a hand when her family had been in crisis. Thanks to him, the other people dared not make things worse for her father and were even respectful toward her. Thus, she left with nothing as a way of paying him back.

She didn’t expect him to give her all of this. When did he give it to me?

Victoria turned to the property agent and checked, “When were these properties transferred to me?”

This was not something the property agent would know.

3/9

He scratched his head and said awkwardly, “I’m not sure about that, Miss Selwyn.

We don’t have access to such information. All we know is the name of our boss. We didn’t even know what she looked like, until today.”

—

Then, a thought dawned on him.

He looked at Victoria, whose ethereal beauty almost didn’t seem real for a human being, and then looked at the tall and handsome gentleman in glasses behind her.

A few thoughts raced through his mind as he began piecing things together.

The property agent began to look between Victoria and Bane. Then, he thought about the properties.

Alas, a heart-wrenching melodrama began to form in his mind.

However, his gaze didn't linger for long before the sophisticated-looking man spoke

1. up.

"Perhaps it's just a misunderstanding, Victoria. But, before we get to the bottom of things, let's not rent the place yet. You booked the hotel for two weeks anyway."

Victoria nodded. "Alright." She did have to clear things up.

However, if she were indeed the owner of these properties, she knew full well who it was who gave them to her.

What she wanted to know was when the properties were transferred to her.

On the way back, Bane suggested, "Why don't you move into my place for now?"

Victoria didn't respond.

"I found you three maids who will work in shifts to cover all 24 hours. That way, you won't need to worry about the kids being left without someone to care for them. You can just focus on your work."

Noting her prolonged silence, Bane chuckled and said, "What's the matter? Do you still feel reluctant? What if I accept rent from you? That should be enough for you to move in, right?"

Victoria turned to him.

"You're willing to accept rent from me?"

"Yeah. I'll just treat it as a side income."

A side income... Why would he need to get a side income?

“How much? I won’t take it if you’re going to charge me a very low rental.”

“It won’t be cheap. It’s a good location and the property value is quite high. I had to spend a fair amount to buy it. It’ll cost you six thousand a month.”

Victoria was startled by the figure he gave.

She didn’t find it expensive. It was perfectly normal for rent in that location to be at least six thousand. She simply didn’t expect Bane to actually rent it to her at market price.

Nevertheless, she felt a lot better now.

“It’s a deal.”

Bane’s eyes flashed with helplessness when he saw the way she lit up with happiness.

He had no choice but to rent the place to her. He probably wouldn’t be able to achieve anything if he didn’t accept her money.

After confirming the move, Bane immediately sent Ethan over to her house that 5/5

night to help her.

That being said, there wasn’t much for her to pack. It hadn’t been long since they landed in Jasea and she didn’t have much yet.

Though, the two children did get a lot of things after their first day of school.

They each had a set of study materials and two sets of uniforms.

Victoria stuffed everything into suitcases before heading down to check out from the suite.

The staff at the front desk didn’t show any displeasure at the fact that she was checking out after only a few days and remained as courteous as ever.

“Thank you for staying with us, Miss Selwyn. Have a good day.”

Soon after Victoria and Bane left, a blue Bentley pulled up outside the hotel.

A tall and slender man stepped out of the car with an expressionless face. A man with a briefcase jogged to keep up with him.

“Please slow down, Mr. Cadogan.”

Alaric continued marching into the hotel while Terrance ran after him with the briefcase.

Alas, a card was needed to access the hotel elevators. He couldn't go up without a hotel card.

Thus, the two men headed to the front desk.

“Good day, sir. How may I help you?”

The front desk agent couldn't stop herself from stealing a few glances at Alaric. He was so handsome that her heart was pounding.

How did we get so lucky today? A handsome man just left and another one came over right after that. Unfortunately, the one who left has a family.

Alaric's expression remained grim and he didn't speak.

Terrance saw the look on Alaric's face and sighed to himself before stepping forward.

“Hi, miss. We're here to look for someone.”

“You're looking for someone?”

“That's right. Did a woman named Victoria Selwyn check into this hotel? What's her room number?”

The front desk agent looked conflicted.

“I'm so sorry, but I can't divulge that information to you.”

“I understand that,” Terrance said. “You have the responsibility of ensuring your customers’ safety. However, that woman, Miss Selwyn, is no ordinary person and we’re not bad guys either. Have you ever seen bad guys wearing suits and driving up in a Bentley?”

Terrance pointed at Alaric who was standing as still as a statue behind him.

“Plus, don’t you recognize him? He’s been in the news and on the front page of financial magazines before.”

The front desk agent paused and looked at Alaric.

It was just as Terrance said. She found that the man didn’t look like a con artist at all. However, she still didn’t recognize him.

Nevertheless, someone else at the front desk did.

“I recognize him. He’s Alaric Cadogan, the head of Cadogan Group. I read about him in a financial magazine. The editor said it wasn’t easy getting an interview with him. Even so, we can’t divulge customer information to you. The only thing I can tell you is that she’s no longer staying at this hotel.”

Chapter 219

Alaric narrowed his eyes. “She’s not here? Then, where is she?”

“We don’t know, Mr. Cadogan. She’s a customer, so she wouldn’t tell us where she was going.”

Terrance nodded. “True, but...” He narrowed his eyes as well. “Is she really gone, or are you just covering for her?”

“No, she’s gone. Right before you came too.”

Alaric looked even more upset. She left right before I came? That’s the same thing that happened the last time I went to her house. This time too? Is that really a coincidence? Alaric looked at the receptionist and asked coldly, “She left alone?”

The receptionists froze for a moment and exchanged a look. “N-No.”

Alaric sneered, then he left. He had no more patience to hear the receptionist’s explanation. Terrance quickly followed him. “It’s unfortunate that Miss Selwyn left. Mr. Cadogan, should we get our men *to* find out where she went?”

All of a sudden, he bumped into Alaric. He quickly backed off, terrified because he didn’t think Alaric would stop all of a sudden. “Sorry, sir. Are you alright?”

“Unfortunate? You think this is a coincidence?” Alaric shot him a look as icy as the air of the tundra.

Terrance pursed his lips and carefully asked, “Do you mean she’s staying away from you, Mr. Cadogan?”

A storm brewed in Alaric’s eyes. Fearing for his life, Terrance curled up a bit and sighed. Since Alaric wasn’t saying anything, he asked, “Should we look for her?”

Look for her? Alaric sneered. Why? To see her dating some other guy? He then left.

Unable to guess what he was thinking, Terrance quickly followed. “Should we find her, Mr. Cadogan?”

The response Terrance received was the car door slamming shut, then the car revved up and left, blasting him with exhaust fumes. Why me?

Once she had settled down, Victoria gave Bane nine grand. “Here. Six months of rent.”

Bane took it. “Thanks.”

“How much did you spend on the nannies?” Three nannies working different shifts is going to cost a lot. Victoria wanted to save money, so she would only hire *one* nanny. After all, the kids had to go to school, so the nanny didn’t have to spend too much time keeping an eye on them. She didn’t have to work at night, so she could take care of the children too.

“Not much. You don’t have to pay me for that.”

“But...”

“You’ve worked hard for my company. Take this as a parting gift.”

“Purely a parting gift? No strings attached?”

“Of course.”

“Very well. Then get me one nanny.”

“Victoria...”

“Or I’m not taking anything from you.”

“Very well.”

In the end, only one nanny was left. Victoria had already paid the rent, so she was feeling a lot better now. It was getting late too, so Bane left. Once he was gone, Victoria prepared the beds and turned on the AC for the children so they could sleep, while she went into the study to work.

some

Bane considered everything before he rented this place to her. The study was big, and there was even a French window too. Right beside it was a big bookshelf, and there was even a ladder to reach the topmost shelves. Victoria loved this place, but she was not in the mood to enjoy the view. Quickly, she checked something on her laptop. What happened earlier in the afternoon was still bothering her.

If those houses were under her name, then all the things he gave her that she refused, all the money he gave her that she gave him back just so they would be even, would have been for nothing. Victoria tried checking the estates’ details. Some were easily searchable, but the finer details, as the agent had said, could never be searched.

If she wanted to know the dates and all the assets she had, she needed someone to help her. Victoria checked the time and quickly called her father's lawyer.

"Miss Selwyn?" Mr. Saunders was surprised that Victoria would call. "Is this about your father?"

"No. I just wanted to ask you something. Can you recommend some good law firms for me?"

"Hm? I do have a junior I can recommend, but he's still handling a case recently. Is this urgent?"

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"Not really."

"I'll give you his number, then. Tell him if you need anything. I'll give him a heads up."

"Thank you, Mr. Saunders." She hung up and continued her research. Five minutes later, her phone rang and she picked it up.

"Hello, Miss Selwyn. I'm Mr. Saunders' junior, Bernard Sandler."

"Hello, Mr. Sandler." Victoria noticed the sound of chatting and raising toasts in the background. He must be busy.

Just when she was about to say something, he asked, "Mind adding me on

Facebook? Mr. Saunders told me what happened, and I want to know what you're looking for. If you're fine with me, I can help you find out what you want to know. I'll bill you later. Is that alright?"

"Sure, thank you." Victoria liked how he worked. Fast, efficient, and she didn't need to say much.

Bernard put his phone down and said, "Go on without me, guys. I have work to do."

"At this hour?"

"Saunders called me. This is his friend, so I can't say no. See you around." Bernard

quickly left and added Victoria on Facebook. A short while later, Victoria gave him her details. When he noticed the name, Bernard froze.

Victoria? Wait. That name... If I'm right, that's the recipient of a huge sum of inheritance. My mentor asked me to handle that case. To confirm things, Bernard quickly called his mentor.

Chapter 220

It had been a while since Victoria gave Bernard her details, but he still hadn't replied. He didn't even bill her anything. She checked the time and wondered if he was playing around. After all, she did hear some noise in the background earlier. She had done all she could. All the information she could get her hands on, she had found them. Further searching would yield nothing, so she closed her laptop and went to bathe.

Hence, she didn't notice Bernard's call. When she came back out, she noticed that he had sent her all the info she needed. She didn't even open the file yet, but one look at the content list, and she thought, No wonder Mr. Saunders recommends him. He is efficient. She didn't look through it but said thank you to Bernard, then she told him to send her the bill.

Even though she was prepared for the results, Victoria was still shocked to see how much wealth she had. She had estates in Gandra, Jasea, and a lot of other cities, and not just any estates. Some estates were managed by someone else, so she was the one who gained the profit. The properties she visited earlier were only finished a few years ago.

Since they couldn't contact her, the managers couldn't rent those estates out.

Finally, Victoria noticed she also had some Cadogan Group's shares. Once she was

done reading, Victoria had no idea what to feel. She bit her lip, her chest heaving. He gave me so much without me knowing. What is the meaning of this? Does his beloved know? Did she agree to this? She couldn't keep reading anymore. Victoria closed her laptop and called Bernard. "Sorry, Mr. Sandler, but can I confirm the veracity of this file? I'm not doubting your professionalism, of course. It's just..."

"It's just that you can't believe how much wealth you have, right?"

Smart. That's exactly what I was trying to say.

"I had the exact same reaction the first time I was handling the case, and I too suspected it to be false, but unfortunately, it's real. My mentor and I listed the whole thing out."

"Your mentor?" Victoria had a bad feeling about this.

"Yes. He's Mr. Cadogan's personal lawyer."

Ugh, I should've known. Mr. Saunders is already capable enough. His junior worked abroad for so long, so that means he must be a capable one too. His mentor must be even more prominent than he is. Of course he's Alaric's lawyer. She didn't think things through, and now she was already entangled in this matter. "You didn't tell your mentor about this, did you? I'm sorry if this sounds rude, but I'm no longer his wife, **so...**"

"Ah, I apologize, but he already knows," said Bernard. "He has the master file, so I asked him to give me a copy. And he asked me a few questions, so I answered **as** honestly as I could."

Sigh. I can't blame him for this. He's the student. Of course he talks to his mentor.

"Sorry, Miss Selwyn. I didn't think this would affect you, but my mentor isn't one to gossip, so don't worry."

Victoria calmed down a little. "Thank you."

"Do you need someone to handle these assets for you?"

"No." Victoria shook her head. "Can we meet tomorrow, Mr. Sandler?"

"Tomorrow afternoon, yes."

"Very well."

They met at a restaurant at the agreed time the next day. Even though Bernard had seen Victoria's picture when he handled the inheritance transfer, he still was stunned by her beauty when he saw her.

Even when Victoria was already saying hi to him, it took him a while to snap out of it.

"Hello, Miss Selwyn."

"Hello, Mr. Sandler."

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They made small talk, and then food was served. Bernard was famished, but he couldn't gorge on his food, not when a beauty like Victoria was right in front of him, so he chose to carefully flip through his file instead. When Victoria told him what she was planning, Bernard froze. "A—Are you serious? You're relinquishing everything?"

On the other hand, Victoria was calm. "Yes. I don't take what's not mine. Give it back to him."

Did I travel into another dimension? She doesn't want all this money? No one can resist money. "But these assets are yours. You're not committing any crime taking them. You'll live your whole life without worry. Are you sure you don't want them?"

"I can live my life without worries even without these things." That man had helped her before. If she took something from him again, she would never be able to repay

her debt.

“So please proceed with my request, Mr. Sandler. I will pay you once it is done. If *you* want an advance payment, I can do that too.”

Bernard was shocked for a long, long time, but he still nodded in the end. “Very well. I’ll handle your request, Miss Selwyn.”

“Thank you.”

Once she was gone, Bernard told his mentor about the situation.

Victoria settled some trivial matters and started to work on her new company. The website was up and running now. Victoria wrote a job advertisement, then she told the website designer to post it on the site.

Advertisements cost a lot, and the company needed a lot of things to get started. It was only now Victoria realized how hard it was to run a company. The next few weeks were busy for her. Victoria worked long hours, and even then, they only managed to hire a few employees. Fortunately, one member of the management team had experience working in a big company, and they started talking about the

company’s issue with Victoria.

“We’re a new company, and our scale is small. After all the scams that have happened, no one wants to work for small companies anymore.”

Victoria looked at him. “So why did you come?”

The person froze. “Sorry?”

“Why did you work for my company?”

That person snickered. “Life had been a little fast-paced for me so I wanted to catch a break, and what’s more, I know you.”

Victoria was surprised. “You know me?”

The person nodded, smiling. "Of course. It's been five years, and *you're* a lot more beautiful than you were, but I recognized you right away. You came to our company for a negotiation back when *you* were working for Cadogan Group, and I was just a regular employee back then."

I see. "So, you climbed all the way to top management in five years?"

"Yes."

"Not bad." Victoria liked that, but that was not the point. First, they had to settle the company's issues.

The man she hired was one Henry Poole, and he said, "It's a simple problem to settle."

Victoria looked at him. "You seem to have a solution."

"Angel investors," said Henry. "If we can have a big company investing in us, we won't have to worry about the operation or funds anymore."

Victoria had considered that, of course, but... "You want me to convince someone to invest in us? When we don't even have ten employees?"

Henry shrugged. "You can do it, can't you?"

Victoria said nothing. Henry didn't care what she was thinking, and *he* started listing out the companies they could convince to invest in them. "First on the list is Cadogan Group and the Floyds."

The mention of Cadogan Group made Victoria silent. Noticing that, Henry smiled.

"Boss, I know you have some... issues with Cadogan Group, but this is for the future of the company. You won't let the past get in your way, will you?"

Victoria took a deep breath to calm herself down, then she smiled. "Sorry, but I will."

Huh? Henry scratched his head sheepishly and coughed. "Very well. Then that leaves us with the Floyds. They're growing strong lately, and that auction a few days ago was proof of it. The new heir showed off h

is wealth without a care in the world. Ah, but boss, Jordan can be quite the playboy, so don't fall for his tricks when you

negotiate, alright?"

Jordan Floyd. He's in my contacts, and he lent me a suit. Perhaps I can use this connection. Quickly, Victoria opened up her contacts and searched for Jordan.

They didn't even talk after they added each other's numbers, pretending that they had never met. Since she was busy, Victoria had forgotten that he lent her the suit.

She took a long time just to come up with an opening text, and she messaged him.

'Thank you for the suit, Mr. Floyd. I've cleaned it, so when can I give it back to you?'

Victoria didn't think he would reply right away so she put her phone down, but then

Jordan texted, 'Oh, and here I thought you wouldn't give it back.'

Sheepishly, Victoria texted, 'Sorry. I've been a bit busy. It's not until now that I have time.' She added, 'So when can we meet?'

Jordan answered a bit flirtatiously, 'If it's you, anytime.'

Victoria was silent for a while, then she texted, 'I'd like to talk about work.'

Jordan didn't reply this time. Victoria held her phone tightly, the look on her face slowly becoming solemn. Was I too forward? But if I beat around the bush, he might take it as a hint he can woo me. She was on guard because of what Henry told her about Jordan.

Five minutes later, he texted, 'Eastton's racecourse. Can you come over right away?'

A racecourse? Not the best place to talk business, but it's a chance. Victoria picked up her bag and scarf, then she left. The weather was a bit windy, so she wrapped the scarf around her neck and hailed a ride.

The racecourse was roaring, and dust flew in the air as a big black horse galloped across the course. Sitting on its back was a slender, handsome man with an aloof

look on his face. The look on his face was dark, and he held the reins firmly. Even from a mile away, everyone could feel the anger coming off him.

Ever since he got onto the track, everyone else led their horses away lest they incur this man's wrath.

Jordan had just come back from a race. Even though it was winter, he downed half a bottle of cold drink like it was tea, then he screwed the cap shut and looked at the angry man. He teased, "What happened to him? He's miffed today."

The people beside him shook their heads. "Not just today. It's been like this for a while."

Huh. "He's been venting at the course for two weeks now. Thanks to him, business has been bad. The owner's complaining but he can't take it up with him. He'd destroy this whole place."

Jordan clicked his tongue. "Who crossed him anyway? Two weeks and he can't even hold it in?"

Someone said, "Who knows? We have no idea what he's thinking. Feels like we're working for a king."

A king? Jordan chuckled, and he took out his phone to check the text. It's been twenty minutes. Wonder where she is right now. Just then, his phone beeped, and a text appeared.

'I'm almost at the course. Where are you? I'll find you, sir.'

Sir? This is amusing. "Interesting. She's older than me, and yet she calls me sir."

Noticing his smile, the people beside him huddled closer. "Oh, a lady? **So**, you found a new toy?"

Jordan shot him a look. "Bah, none of your business."

The guy grinned and was about to tease Jordan more, but a rider vaulted over the obstacle and charged straight at them only to stop a few inches before them.

Shocked, a lot of people backed off while grumbling, and some fell on their rear.

Only Jordan remained still with his phone in his hand.

The man stopped his horse and looked at Jordan and West

Jordan looked at him and cocked his eyebrow then the woman sure but im

bringing one more person

Alaric frowned

Jordan smiled "Ever tried racing with a woman riding with you?"