

Departure with a Belly Chapter 253

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Chapter 253

“That’s not it,” Victoria stated, flatly denying the accusation. Then, she continued, “It’s not what you think, Bane. To be more accurate, I don’t think I’m good enough for you. You shouldn’t waste any more time on me.” That was definitely not an explanation she had come up with to be polite to him. She honestly thought he was too good for her. He was a good man with a great family background, handsome, and never fooled around with women just because of who he was.

“You think I’m too good for you?” After saying that, he chuckled and stepped closer to her. “If that’s what you believe, Victoria, shouldn’t you be asking me that question? Yes, I think you’re good enough for me, so why the doubt?” When she did not reply, he continued, “Do you mean to say you’re still concerned about him? If we had not returned here, you-”

“Five years,” she interrupted.

After hearing that, he was stunned.

“It has been five years. I know how well you treat me. It’s not that I didn’t try to accept you; rather, I realized I couldn’t.” After saying that, Victoria solemnly looked Bane in the eyes through his glasses. “I have told you before that I cannot respond to your love, that you should not be so nice to me.”

He silently stared at her in response and uttered, “I cannot do that. I can’t stop being nice to you or start ignoring you. It hurts me deeply to see you with another man.” Following that, he walked even closer, and he suddenly wrapped an arm around her slender waist and pulled her toward him.

Victoria was startled by Bane’s sudden action and instinctively reached out to shove his chest to prevent him from getting any closer. Still, they were close to one another, and she could smell the cool, refreshing air he exuded.

At that moment, his voice had lost all warmth as a possessive tone crept in. “Ah, so you know that it has been five years. You know how good I’ve been to you. If you just say yes, I will be even better to you in the future. I would do anything you say.”

Although he had poured all his affection into his confession, she frowned even more. In fact, his last sentence even had her somewhat panicking. “You don’t understand at all!”

When Bane heard that, he loomed closer to Victoria and asked, "What don't I understand? Tell me."

"When you're nice to me, I always end up feeling guilty because I have nothing to give in return. To put it bluntly, I don't love you, and being with you would only hurt you. Do you understand?"

"I don't care, Victoria."

She was stunned by his reply.

"You can love whomever you want. All I want is for you to be by my side, to be with me."

Victoria looked at Bane with disbelief and inquired, "How could it be?"

"Why not? I get what I want while you live your own life. Isn't that great?"

After hearing that, she immediately pushed him away and exclaimed, "That's ridiculous. No way."

"Victoria." While saying that, Bane stood still and made no attempt to approach Victoria. "You've only ever rejected me and never tried to date me. *How* do you know that it's impossible unless you try? I gave you three days, and you did not even carefully consider my offer for three full days before saying no. Do you think that's fair to me?"

Then, she froze in her tracks upon hearing that. Fair? After carefully considering his

words, she concluded that she had treated him unfairly. Hence, she closed her eyes.

“If you think three days is too short, how about a week?” Ultimately, **he** had no

choice but to offer a better compromise, deathly afraid that she would reject him at such a time.

When Victoria heard that, a look of exhaustion swept over her face. In general, he is extraordinarily kind and tolerant towards me. It would appear that he does not care what I have done and that he is always accommodating and patient. He is, without a doubt, one of the most perfect men I have ever met. Unfortunately, love has always been a flaw of mine. At that thought, she turned to look at Bane. “I’m sorry.”

However, he calmly gazed back at her. After a few long minutes, a warm smile returned to his face. “It has been an exhausting day, right? Let’s go up. We can talk in another two days.”

“Bane...”

“The children must be worried sick waiting for you. Go on.” Following that, he even put both hands on her shoulder to push her to the elevator. After pressing the button for her floor, he stepped out of the elevator and said, “Let Ethan know to

come down once you're up there."

In the meantime, Victoria frowned and did not say a word. After a while, the elevator doors began to close, and right before they were completely shut, she saw Bane flash her a grin.

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"Goodnight. Sweet dreams." As soon as he finished speaking, the elevator doors closed.

When Victoria returned home, she found Ethan and one of the live-in maids chatting in the living room; upon seeing her, they immediately rose to greet her. With Bane's words in mind, she said, "Bane is waiting for you downstairs."

"Oh, why didn't Mr. Morison come up today? Well, I'm off." Instead of mulling over the situation, Ethan promptly said his goodbyes and headed downstairs.

Not long after he left, she walked over to the window and pulled away the curtain to loom over Bane. She observed him standing by the vehicle, and despite the bright lights shining on him, he appeared so lonely, as if someone had been lost in the dark. Then, as he waited silently by the road until Ethan arrived, the two stood and conversed for a few minutes before entering the car. However, she noticed that Ethan was now behind the wheel, even though Bane had driven the car over just now. After seeing the vehicle was gone, she let the curtains fall back down.

“Mommy.” Nicole, who had called out from behind her, asked, “Where did you go today? Why did you come home so late?”

When Victoria heard that, she turned around and bent down. “I’ll be quite busy for a while, so I will come home late over the next few days.”

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Chapter 253 Can’t Stop Being Nice to You

On the other hand, the two children were gracious enough not to press their mother for more answers. Perhaps, it was because they were still young and not interested in any of her business.

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However, they did not stream tonight either. After dinner, the two children played with their wooden blocks in the living room.

After that, Victoria headed into the kitchen.

“Do you need something, Miss Selwyn?” Jane asked. She was another live-in maid who was younger than Teresa by more than a decade but older than Victoria by a few years. However, Jane had only recently begun working in this occupation, and as soon as she saw Victoria, she nervously wiped her hands dry.

On the other hand, Victoria could see her anxiety, a vast difference in attitude compared to Teresa’s casual and relaxed attitude. Still, she did not attempt to reassure Jane because this was something Jane needed to work on her own. Then,

Victoria nonchalantly looked away and said, "I'm just checking on what we have."

After saying that, she went to the refrigerator to check on some possible ingredients to prepare for breakfast the following day.

Initially, she intended to prepare plain congee and had not given much thought to whether or not Alaric would eat it. Nonetheless, she realized that she needed to

make an effort if she was going to achieve her goal. Later, she reasoned that it was best to prepare him something nutritious since he was sick. Ultimately, she pulled out some rather healthy food that would not be so greasy that it affected his recovery. Afterward, she laid everything out on the countertop. Looking at the ingredients she had pulled out, she knew she would have to wake up 30 minutes earlier the next morning just to cook.

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The next day, Victoria personally took the two children to school. Normally, it would have been Band's responsibility, but after their conversation last night, Victoria decided not to let him do it anymore.

"If you really want to give me time to think, then don't interfere with my thoughts during this time," she told him.

Bane was truly swayed by her words and he didn't show up again. Seeing that he didn't appear, Victoria breathed a sigh of relief and accompanied the two children to school. Since they were earlier than usual and she was carrying a thermos, the two children curiously asked her some questions along the way.

"Well, it's for a business partner of my company. He's sick, so I'm bringing him some food," Victoria explained.

Being the sweet-mouthed child that she was, Nicole not only didn't ask further, but she also praised Victoria. "Mommy, you're so nice, beautiful, and kind-hearted.

Whoever marries you will be the luckiest man in the world."

Hearing this, Victoria curled the corner of her lips. These words were taught to the two children by Summer in the past, and Nicole often used them to compliment

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Victoria. Every time she said it, Victoria couldn't help but smile. It wasn't because she thought the compliment was great, but because Nicole's expression was especially adorable and her tone conveyed pride.

"All right, you two, hurry inside. Don't argue or pick fights with anyone at school.

Take care of each other, understand?"

After giving the two children instructions, Victoria watched them enter the school before she turned and left.

At the hospital, Terrance looked at Alaric, who was sitting up early in the morning with a pallid expression.

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"Mr. Cadogan, it's still early. Miss Selwyn won't be here so soon. You didn't get much

sleep last night either. How about getting some more rest?" He tried to persuade Alaric several times to rest more.

Unfortunately, no matter how many times he said it until his mouth ran dry, Alaric only furrowed his brows and sent him away dismissively. "Enough chatter."

Terrance was speechless. Forget it, I shouldn't have spoken up. Let him be in pain. Thinking this, he simply shut his mouth and stopped persuading Alaric.

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As time passed, Alaric's brow became more and more furrowed. He glanced at the door and then at his wrist. Afterward, his expression grew increasingly grim. Could she be deceiving me? Is it possible that she won't come at all? But that couldn't be true. If she didn't want to come, she wouldn't have promised me yesterday.

After waiting for some time, Terrance sensed that something was wrong. He could clearly feel the heavy aura emanating from Alaric. So, he took the initiative to speak

1. up. "How about I go and check outside the hospital?"

Alaric's face remained cold with his thin lips tightly pursed. He didn't say whether it was a good idea or not, but he didn't refuse either. In this kind of situation, it was generally considered as consent.

Hence, Terrance got up, intending to go and check outside the hospital, but as soon as he reached the door of the ward, he saw a slender figure carrying a thermos walking toward him.

A smile appeared on Terrance's face, and his voice resonated with joy as he shouted, "Miss Selwyn!"

At this, Alaric instantly relaxed. The creases on his forehead, which had been tightly furrowed, also smoothed out at that moment. His heart, which was burdened with worry, was finally set at ease.

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He watched as Victoria walked in while Terrance gave her a puzzled look. Then, she gave him a strange glance. “Why were you guarding the door?”

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Terrance scratched his head and was about to explain, but Victoria interrupted him. “Don’t tell me you doubted whether I would come.”

“N–No, I just wanted to see if you had arrived,” Terrance replied.

Victoria walked into the ward while speaking, calmly placing the thermos she was holding on the table. Subsequently, she rolled up her sleeves and opened the lid of the thermos.

As soon as the lid was lifted, the aroma of the food spread through the room.

Terrance, who had already eaten breakfast, found his appetite stirring. He had thought that she would bring store–bought meals, but when he leaned in for a closer look, he realized that she cooked everything herself.

Alaric watched her, observing her skilled movements from the side as she prepared the food. It was as if she had done these things a thousand times before. The more he watched, the more furrowed his brow became.

When Victoria brought the food to him, she said, “Eat up. It’s all liquid food. I asked

the doctor, who said this is the best type of food for your current condition.”

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After a few seconds of silence, Alaric accepted the bowl.

The taste was good. Alaric, who hadn't had much of an appetite for a long time, suddenly felt hungry, But...

He glanced at Victoria. “You made this yourself?”

Victoria replied with a question, “Why? Is there a problem?”

Alaric pursed his lips. He had wanted to say that she didn't know how to do these things herself in the past. However, he realized that it was all from five years ago. Many things had happened to him in those five years, not to mention to her.

Seeing that he didn't touch the bowl, Victoria urged him, “Eat quickly. There was some traffic on the way, so the food may not be as hot anymore. If you keep holding onto it, it'll get cold.”

Victoria's urging prompted Alaric to stop hesitating. He picked up the spoon and began eating bite by bite.

Victoria averted her gaze; she did not continue to watch Alaric eat. Instead, she got up and went to find Terrance.

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“Did the doctor say anything about his condition today?”

“The doctor came to check on him in the morning. He said that if Mr. Cadogan is willing to cooperate with the treatment, he can recover quite quickly. But the most important thing is...”

“What is it?”

“His stomach needs to recover. Even if he’s discharged from the hospital after recuperating here, he still needs to eat properly and can’t drink alcohol like before.”

“That’s for sure,” Victoria said firmly. “Let him stay in the hospital for a while first.”

Alaric listened to their conversation while finishing the liquid food in the bowl.

When Terrance came back and saw this scene, he was shocked. He had been with Alaric all this while, yet it was the first time he had seen Alaric with such a good appetite.

As Alaric’s stomach was still in a state of recovery, when Victoria saw that he had finished the bowl, she asked, “Is it to your liking?”

“Yes.” Alaric nodded with his eyes still fixed on her as if afraid she would leave after

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hearing his response.

“All right then, you’ll have to stick to liquid food for the next few days. I’ll come back in the afternoon.”

After saying that, Victoria started to pack up her things, preparing to leave.

Alaric’s expression was somewhat astonished. “Are you leaving already?”

He hadn’t expected that she would come for such a short while. Did she come all

the way here just to watch him eat?

Alaric stared at the empty bowl in his hand and instantly regretted it.

If he had known, he would have eaten the meal slowly.

He hadn't expected their time together to be so short.

"I still have to go to work." Victoria closed the thermos, then looked at Alaric expressionlessly. "Rest well and remember to eat lunch."

After speaking, Victoria turned to Terrance. "If he doesn't eat, let me know. I won't come in the afternoon then."

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Terrance replied, "Sure. If Mr. Cadogan doesn't eat well at noon, I'll immediately send a message to you."

Alaric was speechless.

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After leaving the hospital, Victoria headed straight to the company. There was traffic on the way, so she arrived at the office a bit late. However, she unexpectedly ran into the same guy from yesterday.

As soon as he saw Victoria, the bespectacled guy immediately wore a shy smile and even reached out his hand toward her.

"Hello, we're colleagues now."

Victoria shook his hand.

"Yesterday, I thought you were also here for an interview. I didn't expect you to

already be working here. Hey, how did you end up choosing this small company? Did you know in advance that Cadogan Group would invest in them?"

In advance?

Victoria chuckled lightly and said, "Not exactly in advance, but I definitely knew before all of you."

"Well, that's true. After all, you're already in the company while we only saw it in the job posting."

There were other people in the elevator, but nobody had the desire to converse, except for the bespectacled guy. Besides him, Victoria didn't see any other familiar faces.

It seemed that apart from the bespectacled guy who shared the same elevator with her yesterday, everyone else had been eliminated.

When the elevator doors opened, Victoria walked in the direction on the left. The bespectacled guy and the others in the elevator instinctively followed behind her. After walking for a while, Victoria noticed that they were all following her, so she couldn't help but stop and look at them in confusion.

"Why are you all following me?"

The bespectacled guy pushed up his glasses and smiled shyly. "We're all on our first day of work and don't know where to go. Who else should we follow if not you?"

Victoria was speechless.

It seemed that they all thought of her as an employee and believed that following her would lead them to the office.

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Chapter 255 Embarrassed

Indeed, following her would take them to an office, but not the employees' shared office. It would be her private office.

And now it appeared that it wasn't just the bespectacled guy who thought that way, but the others who stopped behind him thought the same.

So be it.

Just as Victoria was about to turn around and take them to the shared office, Henry happened to walk past from the side.

When he saw Victoria, he instinctively greeted her.

"Boss."

The bespectacled guy and the others were mystified.

Boss?

Who's the boss?

Confusion appeared in their eyes.

Henry greeted Victoria and then noticed the group of people behind her. Since he

had personally interviewed them, they had already met yesterday. In fact, some of them were even his former subordinates.

So, Henry immediately recognized them and asked, "How did you end up here? The staff office is not in this direction."

The bespectacled guy pointed at Victoria and said, "We're following her."

The others behind the bespectacled guy pointed at the bespectacled guy and said, "We're following him."

Henry and Victoria were both stupefied.

After a moment, Henry asked in confusion, "What are you all following Miss Selwyn for?"

The bespectacled guy said, "Huh? Isn't she an employee?"

After asking, the bespectacled guy suddenly noticed something and his face instantly turned red as he looked at Victoria. "Wait, Mr. Poole, are you saying that she is the boss of our company?"

"Yeah, of course!"

The bespectacled guy became embarrassed. "I thought she was an employee."

This was a huge misunderstanding.

"Sorry." The bespectacled guy stammered an apology to Victoria, feeling extremely awkward. Not only had he mistaken this beautiful woman for an employee, but he even thought that if they got to know each other, he might pursue her in the future.

Now that he realized she was his boss...

He had simply been delusional.

"It's okay." Victoria raised her lips. "It's my fault for not making it clear. Go ahead and get to work."

"Let's go. I'll take all of you to the staff office."

After greeting Victoria, Henry led everyone away.

The bespectacled guy followed Henry closely. "Mr. Poole, is she really our boss?"

Despite Henry making it clear just now, the guy still asked the question at this moment.

Henry was seasoned and could see through the guy's thoughts at a glance.

"What's wrong? Don't tell me you want to pursue her if she's not the boss?"

Sure enough, after Henry said that, the guy's face turned even redder.

"Mr. Poole, please don't say that."

"Haha!"

Henry laughed heartily. "Young man, what are you afraid of? If you like her, go for it.

As far as I know, our boss is still single."

The bespectacled guy paused, his eyes lighting up again. But after thinking for a moment, he lowered his gaze with a dejected look.

"Forget it. She's so beautiful. Even if she's not the boss, I'm not worthy of her, not to mention that she's wealthy."

Upon hearing this, Henry patted the guy's shoulder. "Ah, I didn't expect you to be so self-aware. Just focus on your work. Even if you can't find a boss like ours in the future, you'll certainly excel."

The group of people continued chatting as they walked away.

As it was a new company, Victoria had many things to attend to. She was busy until noon when Henry came to call her downstairs for lunch.

The company's cafeteria was not yet established, so the two of them had to go to a nearby restaurant.

During the meal, Victoria was quiet. Her phone vibrated, and she took it out to

check. It was a message from Terrance.

'Report, Miss Selwyn, Mr. Cadogan had lunch on time today!'

Report?

On time?

When she saw these words, a smile formed at the corners of her mouth. She raised her lips and replied to Terrance.

'OK.'

At the hospital, the phone beeped, and Alaric immediately looked at Terrance.

"What did she reply?"

Terrance glanced at the message on his phone and could only tell Alaric, "She did reply, but... it's a bit succinct."

Upon hearing this, Alaric raised his hand directly. "Let me see."

Terrance reluctantly handed his phone to Alaric.

Alaric glanced at the message Victoria had replied with and furrowed his brows tightly.

"A bit succinct?"

Terrance pressed his lips and remained silent.

Alaric handed the phone back to him, and his previously good mood disappeared.

Seeing him slumped and completely dejected, Terrance spoke up. "Mr. Cadogan, don't think too much about it. Although the message is short, you can see how quickly Miss Selwyn replied. It shows that she cares about you."

Upon hearing this, Alaric gave him a cold glance. "Do you believe in the words you just said?"

“Well, I think it’s worth believing.”

“Hmph, would you reply to someone you care about with just a single word?”

“Mr. Cadogan, to be precise, it was two letters. Besides, you have to understand that it was me who sent her the message. I’m just your subordinate. Would she have a long conversation with one of the subordinates? That’s not possible, right?”

By the end of Terrance’s explanation, Alaric was actually convinced.

“Then I’ll send another message.”

Without waiting for Terrance to stop him, Alaric sent a message.

“I had lunch on time. When will you come in the afternoon?”

Victoria’s reply came quickly, but the message was still short.

“After work.”