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However, the smile disappeared from her face after just a moment, because she started worrying about Alaric again.

Being an observant man, Terrance immediately noticed the drastic and instantaneous change in her facial expression. So, he quickly comforted her, saying, “Relax, Miss Selwyn. Seriously, don’t worry about it. Mr. Cadogan never does anything that he isn’t confident about.”

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“I know that.” Victoria nodded. Having known Alaric for such a long time, she knew of course that he would never do anything that he wasn’t confident about. Still, it was one thing to know about it, but it was another thing to be worried about him.

In reality, though, their journey was smooth without a hitch because the man had stayed behind to deal with things over there. After arriving at a safe location, Terrance escorted Victoria and the kids into a room.

The journey here had taken them a long time. So, when Terrance was about to leave, Victoria stopped him, asking, “When will he presumably be back?”

“Well...” Terrance shook his head. “I’m not really sure about this. He’ll be back once he i
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done dealing with the stuff over there.”

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“Hasn’t he given you an answer yet?”

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“Miss Selwyn, you traveled with me all the way here, during which time my phone rang only once. It was the phone call from Miss Jones, and you know that.”

The light in Victoria’s eyes slowly dimmed at Terrance’s reply.

Just then, Terrance’s phone happened to start ringing.

Victoria’s eyes lit up. “Is that him-“

Terrance took out his phone to take a look. Then, he replied, “No, it’s not him.”

The light in Victoria’s eyes vanished at once. “I got it.”

After taking a look at his phone, Terrance tentatively asked, “Miss Selwyn, can I go ahead with my work if there’s nothing else?”

Victoria nodded. “Sure, just go ahead.”

Terrance left soon after that, whereas Victoria let out a sigh before closing the door of the room.

The room was neat and clean. At first, she thought this room was intended for them,

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but after getting in, she noticed there were signs of daily life in the room. There were men's clothes hanging in the closet; she recognized at a glance that these were Alaric's. In other words, Terrance had taken them directly to Alaric's own room.

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It was already getting late now. After running around all day with her, the two kids were terribly exhausted. At this moment, they were lying sprawled on the couch. Seeing her come back, they both called out to her in a weak voice, "Mommy."

It simply pained Victoria to see them like this. Just when she wanted to go over to them, she suddenly recalled something. Turning around, she trotted back to push the door open just in time to see Terrance return. "Mr. Levane, my daughter-

"By the way, Miss Selwyn, the doctor is already on his way here and will probably arrive in a moment. Would you like to get something to eat before getting Miss Nicole's foot treated?"

In reality, after spending all day on the run, Victoria was already so tired that she had no appetite for food. Well, that's okay for me, but not for the kids, she thought. Hence, she nodded. "Yeah, okay. Please get something for them to eat."

Soon after that, there was food delivered to their room.

Making use of the time in between, Victoria helped the twins change into clothes

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prepared by the servants and even washed their feet. When the doctor arrived, Nicole

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was sitting on the couch, eating with a bowl in one hand and a spoon in the other, while her pink and tender feet were swinging back and forth in the air.

At seeing this, the doctor instantly got the picture of what was wrong with the girl.

“Miss Selwyn, the doctor is here,” Terrance reminded Victoria.

Victoria signaled Nicole to put down her bowl, upon which the girl immediately set it down on the dining table. After shifting a little away from the dining table, she sat obediently.

The doctor couldn't help but chuckle at the sight of this. “Relax. It's a private consultation, anyway. Just make yourself at home,” he said before crouching down in front of Nicole. He gently held her right ankle in his hand, asking, “Did you hurt this foot?”

The moment he held her ankle, Nicole nervously clutched her shirt and nodded.

The doctor examined her fair ankle before gently pressing a particular spot. All at once, Nicole trembled with pain and cried out, “Mommy!”

Victoria's heart ached instantly, and she stretched out her hands for her to hold onto.

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“Looks like it hurts here. How about this side? Does it hurt as well?” The doctor spent some time examining Nicole's ankle. Then, he announced, “The girl is fine; she just sprained her ankle, that's all. I'll prescribe some medicine for her. She'll recover with a

few days' rest, but be careful not to let her be up and about for the next few days."

Victoria thanked the doctor, who then prescribed some medicine for Nicole before leaving.

This took over half an hour. After the doctor had left, Victoria carried Nicole back to where she had sat just now. While doing that, she instructed the girl, "Next time, if you hurt yourself, you must tell me immediately. Don't try to bear with it on your own. You understand?"

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Having learned her lesson this time, Nicole nodded obediently. "I understand, Mommy."

"Alright. Now hurry and finish your food before going to bed with your brother."

Nicole picked up her spoon, but she didn't move after that. Instead, she stared at Victoria, asking, "Mommy, why isn't Mr. Night with us? Where is he?"

That's my question, too. Victoria also wanted to ask about this. It had been a long time **since** they came back here, not to mention the time they had spent on their journey.

And yet, there was still no word from Alaric. She was worried sick about the man right

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now, but she couldn't let it show in front of the kids. Therefore, she had no choice but to

pat Nicole's head and explain softly, "Mr. Night has something that he's busy dealing with. Just go to sleep tonight, and when you wake up tomorrow, you'll get to see him,

okay?”

“Okay.”

After Victoria got the two little ones to sleep, the room was finally silent. After making sure that they wouldn't wake up again, she got up, opened the door, and walked out of the room.

This place appeared to be a small base of operations, and it was well-built in terms of structure. It wasn't easy to enter from the outside, nor was it easy for the people inside to get out. Not only that, it was guarded everywhere. Seeing her come out, everyone nodded to her politely and greeted her, saying, “Miss Selwyn.”

She ran into a person almost every few steps she took, and all of them spoke to her. At first, she nodded and smiled at them when they greeted her, but as this went on, this became really too much for her. She looked at them embarrassedly, saying, “Just go ahead with your business. I'm just walking around, so you guys don't have to care about me.”

Their leader stepped forward and replied, “Miss Selwyn, you can walk around here if you

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want to, but you'd better not go beyond this gate. Mr. Cadogan is yet to return, which

means that the danger isn't over yet. So, before he comes back, you'd better stay in your

room or move around under our watch."

If Victoria were to hear this from Bane's men, she would only think they were trying to keep her confined, but thanks to the different environment, Alaric's men made it sound like they were trying to keep her safe. At the thought of this, she pursed her lips and began thinking seriously. Am I being too unfair to Bane? But had he not had me confined, my relationship with him wouldn't have come to this.

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After a moment of thought, Victoria ultimately decided against heading outside. It was already late at night, but they were still standing guard for the sake of her safety.

Wouldn't she be causing more trouble for them if she continued to wander around?

Hence, once she made up her mind, Victoria said to him, "How about this? I won't go anywhere, but I have to trouble you with something."

"Miss Selwyn, all of us are doing our jobs on Mr. Cadogan's behalf. As you're Mr.

Cadogan's family, your business is his business, and Mr. Cadogan's business is also our

business. That's why, you can just give us the word if you need anything in the future. It won't be any trouble at all."

"If Mr. Levane comes over later, can you tell him to see me?"

"No problem. I'll ask him now."

"Wait, you don't have to..."

At first, she was about to tell him not to go out of his way and just notify Terrance if they saw him, but she didn't expect the man to pick up his phone and instantly give

Terrance a call.

After the call went through, he immediately said, “Mr. Levane, Miss Selwyn would like to

speak to you about something. Can you come over immediately?”

Victoria was rendered speechless. Fine, let’s just go with that, she thought to herself in awe, They’re way too efficient.

“Miss Selwyn, Mr. Levane said he will come over soon. You can wait for him back in the room.”

“Thanks. I’ll be going back, then.”

Unable to refute, she could only accept her fate and return to her room.

After returning to her room, Victoria took a seat on the couch and began to wait. A few minutes later, there was a knock on the door.

Once Victoria opened the door, Terrance asked, “You were looking for me, Miss Selwyn?”

“Where is he? Is there still no news about him?”

Victoria immediately wanted to know what was happening with Alaric.

Hearing that, Terrance let out a sigh and shook his head slightly.

“No, not yet. Miss Selwyn, it’s getting late. Why don’t you get some rest? If we receive any news, I will make sure to notify you immediately.”

As a matter of fact, Victoria was more than aware that he would definitely come to see her as soon as he returned, and there was no need for Terrance to pass the news to her. And yet, she still couldn’t stop herself from worrying. The situation wouldn’t be as bad if they were in their home country, but if something happened while they were abroad...

At that thought, Victoria bit her lip and asked, “This might come off as rude, but I still have a question. Since there are so many people here, can’t you send some of them over to help?”

Hearing that, Terrance shook his head helplessly.

“Miss Selwyn, do you think that I haven’t thought of what you just said? However, Mr. Cadogan would not agree to it. Including me, everyone has to stay here to ensure your safety. This is also to stay on the safe side and prevent anything from going wrong.”

At his words, Victoria immediately understood that if he hadn’t had to stay here to protect her, he would’ve gone to look for Alaric long ago. With that being said, if she continued being stubborn, she might cause them to dislike her. After giving it some thought, she eventually lowered her gaze and fell silent.

On the other hand, Terrance felt awkward upon seeing her expression. Why does Miss Selwyn look like that? Did I say something wrong? Or maybe, I was being too harsh? Thinking that, he immediately decided to apologize to her. However, just as the words were on the tip of his tongue, an overjoyed and excited voice called out to them from behind.

“Victoria!”

The familiar voice caused Victoria to look up and whip around toward the source, where Summer was enthusiastically running over to her.

“Miss Jones.”

“Summer!”

Victoria’s emotions were momentarily replaced by joy as she hugged Summer.

Upon seeing the embracing women, Terrance silently backed away and took his leave.

When Summer and Victoria finally released each other from **their** embrace, Victoria’s

eyes darkened as she noticed that Terrance had already left. However, she realized that

she couldn't force an answer out of him even if he stayed behind as he still had his **own** matters to attend to, so she decided to let his departure go.

Sensing her best friend's emotions, Summer immediately came to full alert and asked, "What's wrong?"

Returning to her senses, Victoria smiled carelessly. "It's nothing. Since you're finally back now, does that mean your car has been fixed?"

"Not yet. The devil was scared that I'd be too worried about you, so he had someone to send me back first."

As soon as she finished speaking, she immediately corrected herself, "No, I can't call him the devil anymore since I already promised not to give him any nicknames. From now on, I'll call him Mr. Ludson."

"Nickname?"

"That's right. Because he came with me to see you this time, I've been spending more time with him, and sometimes I'll subconsciously call him the devil..."

Victoria fell silent, wanting to say to her, As expected of you.

"Didn't he get mad?"

"Why would he? It's not like that nickname came out of nowhere. It's the truth. He's always making me work overtime, and I don't have the time to look for a boyfriend. The one who's suffering has always been me, you know. And most importantly, I don't think he dares to get mad. Do you know how shocked I was when I said I wanted to look for you and he told me that he'll come with me? I thought that he was just a devil, but I never expected him to have his moments where he's so righteous."

“Righteous?” This particular adjective caused the corners of Victoria’s lips to curl upward uncontrollably. “So, you think that he followed you here out of a sense of righteousness?”

“What else could it be?” Summer refuted. Then, she held her chin in her hand and began to ponder solemnly. “If it’s not because he’s a righteous person, what other reason is there? Oh! I know, he doesn’t want to lose me, an employee that he can exploit.”

Victoria was rendered speechless, unable to form a reply to the conclusion Summer achieved after pondering so seriously.

“How did you come to this conclusion?”

“I said I wanted to quit my job, and he said he’d come with me. What other explanation is there? He’s just scared of losing his employee. I tell you what, he just wants to help me take care of everything so that I’d go back to work and continue living under his oppression.”

Victoria fell into a hush. Although she knew that it was not the right time, she could sense that something was off. This time, Erik hadn’t come to see her for simple reasons.

After all, this matter involved confinement, but Erik was able to take her here without involving the police. Would he get into something so dangerous just to take her back to the company to exploit her? It sounded absurd no matter how she thought about it.

And yet, with her best friend’s way of thinking, all she could think of was exploitation, and it seemed that she hadn’t considered any other possibilities.

Thinking that, Victoria nudged her kindly, “Actually, have you ever considered the fact that he may be worried about you?”

Summer's expression momentarily froze at her words before she exclaimed with a look of astonishment, "How could that be? Victoria, you've got it wrong. This is the devil we're talking about, you know. Why would he be worried about me?"

Victoria laughed. "Is that so? Then, how will you explain why he came all the way here with you if he isn't worried about you? After all, this isn't just any other trip."

Hearing that, Summer fell silent, and the two stared at each other quietly.

All of a sudden, Summer burst out, "According to **your** words, does it mean that he's genuinely worried about me? But, why would he worry about me? Could it be that he likes me?"

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Next to her, Victoria raised an eyebrow in amusement. Summer barely used her brain when she needed to, but once she actually thought about things, she would always have such a wild imagination.

She raised her eyebrow before saying, "There's no telling about that. Maybe he really likes you?"

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"No way!" Summer immediately shook her head in denial. "How could the devil possibly like me? Oh, wait, that was a mistake. It should be Mr. Ludson since I promised not to call him nicknames anymore. He'd be insane to like me!"

"Then why do you think he doesn't like you?"

"It's obvious. I'm just an ordinary employee, while he has all kinds of wealthy and beautiful women around him who have good looks and figures as well as high statuses and influence. He'd be insane to like me."

Victoria was displeased to hear her best friend demeaning herself, and she refuted unhappily, "You're not that bad either."

"Oh, I know." Summer wrapped her arms around her and said cheerily, "Of course, I know I'm not that bad, but, Boo, we have to look at the bigger picture. It's true that there's a huge difference if I compared myself to those wealthy and pretty women, and since Mr. Ludson sees women like them all around him, how would he ever like me? If he didn't tag along with me to exploit me, then it means that it's because he's a righteous man."

However, Victoria shook her head in disagreement. "Sometimes, feelings don't just appear from looking at someone's capabilities. For me, it's spending a long time together. Besides, sometimes, it takes just the right moment and the right person to fall in love in an instant."

Hearing that, Summer felt that she had a point.

"Yeah, that makes sense too, but I still don't think it's possible. You really don't know how many women are around him. Wait, no, you should know since Alaric has just as many women surrounding him. Either way, they're always flocking to him like moths to a light."

Victoria did not intend to continue arguing with her. After all, it was not her place to dictate how Erik felt about Summer. If he truly had feelings for her and was able to accompany her to a place like this, he would certainly seize any available opportunities on his own if anything happened in the future without needing any help from anyone else. In fact, her interference might even dampen the fun for the two of them.

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At that thought, she chuckled and conceded, "Yes, you have a point as well. Just take

your time, then.”

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Seeing that she wasn't planning to delve into the topic any further, Summer lost interest as well and changed the topic.

“By the way, wasn't it Alaric who saved you? Where is he? I can't believe he's able to hold himself back from meeting you when you haven't seen each other for a long time.”

Victoria had been distracted by this matter during their conversation, and now that Summer brought it up again, her emotions took a steep fall downward as well.

“He didn't come back with us.”

“What?” Summer was astonished. “If he didn't come back with you, where did he go?”

Victoria lowered her gaze. “Right as he found me, Bane's men showed up.”

At her words, Summer immediately understood. Since they ran into Bane's men, it meant that Alaric stayed behind to fend them off while sending Victoria back in one piece. As for what would happen afterward, it was something they couldn't begin to predict.

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“How long has it been since you came back? Hasn't he sent any news over?”

Victoria shook her head. “No.”

“Well...” Summer looked at her. All of a sudden, she bit her lip and reached out to hug her. “I'm sorry, I didn't know things were this bad. If I did, I wouldn't have said all that.”

“This isn't because of you.”

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However, Summer was still quite downcast. “I feel like you won't be able to sleep if he doesn't send any news today. In that case, I won't sleep either. I'll stay here and wait for

the news with you. When Alaric comes back and you can relax, I'll leave."

"It's fine, Summer." Victoria shook her head. "I can just stay here by myself. You spent the whole day traveling today, so you should go back and get some rest."

"Shut up and stop chasing me away. I'm your best friend, and we haven't met in such a long time. Can't I stay to sleep with you? Or do you just not want me here?"

"Of course not. You can stay, then."

In the end, Summer stayed behind to wait with her. As the two were unable to sleep, Summer specifically gave instructions to prepare a large feast for them as well as some
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wine, which she drank with Victoria in a room next door that was close to the balcony.

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"It's been a really long time since I drank wine with you. Even though you stopped drinking after you got married, today is a special day. Shall we have a toast to celebrate your safe return?"

Although Victoria did not wish to consume any alcohol, she didn't want to burst Summer's bubble either. After all, it was not easy for her to come all the way from a different country just to see her.

Hence, she raised her glass and tapped it against Summer's. "All right, then I'll give you a toast, but just once."

Once the two filled their bellies with a glass of wine, Summer began to eat the snacks that were scattered on the table.

"You should eat a little. You probably haven't eaten much since you escaped, and I didn't even finish my dinner either since I left after a few bites. I'm starving now."

After taking a bite, Summer noticed that Victoria had not touched her fork. She placed

some food on her plate and said, “Oh, come on, just eat some for me.”

“Summer, I don’t have any appetite.”

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“I know, but you still have to eat something. If you don’t eat, what if we don’t have the energy to wait for the entire night later?”

Hence, under Summer’s strong persuasion, Victoria finally ate some of her food. The two waited until late at night and eventually leaned back on the couch, exhausted.

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All of a sudden, Summer shot to her feet. “Victoria, rest here for a moment. I’m going to see if Mr. Ludson is back yet.”

As she had arrived first, Victoria had been wondering when she would leave to look for Erik, but she hadn’t expected that Summer would be unable to hold back when it had only been a little over an hour.

“All right, you can go ahead, but it’ll be late once you’re done, so you don’t have to come back. Go back home and get some rest instead.”

A moment of thought later, Summer eventually nodded.

After Summer’s departure, Victoria continued to wait alone on the couch. A long time had gone by, to the point where she was drifting off on the couch, when she finally heard the sound of footsteps coming from outside.

In her half-awake state, she even thought that she had misheard things. As her head

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felt heavy, she didn’t climb to her feet to investigate and instead remained leaning on the couch. She blearily listened as the footsteps stopped in front of her door, immediately followed by the sound of the doorknob turning.

The sound pierced through the silent night, instantly jolting Victoria awake. She abruptly pushed herself up from the couch and stared at the door warily.

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Whom could it *be* at this hour? Although her surroundings were well guarded, Victoria was still on high alert. What if it's someone else?

Just as she was thinking worriedly to herself, the door opened, and a familiar silhouette.

appeared before her eyes. The man had stunning features and a towering figure, and his deep gaze immediately landed on her face. The moment she saw him, Victoria nearly thought that she was hallucinating.

“You...”

However, as soon as she opened her lips, Alaric swooped inside like a gust of wind and

stopped before her, where he bent down and embraced her. As his familiar scent enveloped her, Victoria found her eyes closing on their own, and she reached out to return his hug. When her hand came into contact with his lower back, he tightened his arms around her.

All of a sudden, she smelled the faint stench of blood. Her eyes immediately shot open, and she began to lightly struggle from his grasp.

“Let go of me.”

However, it was as if the man before her did not hear her, and he said hoarsely, “Just a little longer.”

Hugging wasn't an important matter, but the fact that he was hurt was. Hence, Victoria did not concede and began to struggle a little more fiercely when he refused to let go.

Her repeated resistance left Alaric with no choice but to release his grip.

After he let go, Victoria took a few steps back and looked at him up and down, examining him while frowning.

“What’s wrong?” Alaric asked softly, noticing her expression.

As soon as he spoke, Victoria walked forward and immediately reached out to tug at his collar, wanting to unbutton his shirt. And yet, the moment she touched the first button, Alaric grabbed her hand.

“What are you doing?” he asked hoarsely, his deep gaze boring into her.

His behavior caused Victoria to furrow her brows tightly. “I’m not going to do anything. I just want to see where you’re hurt.”

Alaric fell silent. So, she just wanted to see my wounds. I thought she wanted to...

“What’s with your expression? Did you think that I’d do something to you?” Upon saying that, she immediately slapped his hand. “Let go and let me see.

It was as if Victoria had transformed into a fierce demon all of a sudden, and after chiding him in a low voice, she pushed his hand away and began to unfasten his buttons. Since the stench of blood on his body is so strong, he must be seriously injured, she thought to herself, her brows tightly furrowed.

Alas, she didn’t get to loosen all of his buttons. She had just reached his second button when Alaric grabbed her hand once more. Forced to stop in her tracks, Victoria raised her head to look at him.

“It’s just a small scratch. You don’t have to take off my clothes”

Victoria didn’t buy his excuse. “If it’s just a scratch, why would the smell of blood be so strong?”

“Because the blood isn’t mine; it’s someone else’s.”

After hearing that the blood belonged to someone else, Victoria felt her heart freeze.

“S—Someone else’s?”

Her subtle reaction caught Alaric’s notice and triggered a thought within him. His

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almond–shaped eyes narrowed slightly, and an unknown emotion pushed him to say,

“Worried? What if I said it’s Bane’s blood?”

From his tone, Victoria assumed that he was pulling her leg, but she felt her heart sink heavily into her stomach. Since he had stayed there for such a long time, there was no way that he could avoid a fight with Bane.

Thus, she began to scan her eyes across his face. Previously, she only focused on the smell of blood that emanated from him and hadn’t paid much attention to his face, but as she scrutinized him closely now, she noticed that there were wounds on his face as well, around his eyes, the corners of his mouth, and not even his jaw had been spared. If the places she could see were this badly injured, what about the places underneath his clothes?

At that thought, Victoria began to grow frantic. “Where exactly are you hurt? Take off your clothes so I can see.”

Alaric stared at her quietly, his handsome features painted in exasperation. “Didn’t I tell you already? It’s Bane’s blood.”

Victoria’s hand tightened by his neck as she clenched his collar while biting her lip. Her behavior did not go unnoticed by Alaric, and his gaze turned dark and even bitter.

“Are **you** worried **about** him?”

“Alaric!”

As soon as he finished speaking, he heard Victoria roar at him aggressively. “Do you think saying that would do anything at a time like this? Even if he’s hurt, I can’t just teleport to his side. I’m right in front of you, and I want to see your wound.”

Alaric froze.

“Or were you just lying to me and you are scared of me finding out that you’re badly hurt? Is that why you’re saying these things to confuse me?”

He fell into a long silence at her words, and it was sometime later when he reached out to hold her wrist, lowering his head. “Then, did it work? Are you worried about him, or are you more worried about me?”

Victoria was rendered speechless as she met his eyes. A moment later, she couldn’t help but say, “You’re so childish.”

“How am I childish?” Alaric’s grip tightened around her hand. “Is it childish of me to want to know how the woman I love feels?”

At that moment, he became extremely headstrong all of a sudden, and his

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straightforward yet passionate words overwhelmed her, particularly when he called her **the** woman he loved. When did he become so ardent and uninhibited?

“Answer me.”

Since she hadn’t replied, Alaric did not let her off easily and instead clenched his hand around hers, continuing to press her for an answer, “Is this question difficult to answer?”

“No, I was just...”

“You were just more worried about him than me? Do you want to go back to him?”

This question elicited a frown from Victoria, and she looked at him exasperatedly. “Do you have to ask that question?”

“Yes. Before you answer me, I won’t let you unbutton my shirt.”

At that, he even reached out to cover his collar, as if her answer was some kind of switch that would unlock his buttons.

After staring at him for a moment, Victoria decided not to go along with his whims. “**All** right. Since you don’t want me to look, just forget it.”

With those words, she immediately let go so that she wasn’t touching him anymore **and** **turned** around.

Alaric’s face dropped. He hadn’t expected her to be so riled up. Upon seeing that she was about to leave, he hastily reached out and grabbed her.

“Don’t go.”

With her back facing him, Victoria heard Alaric lower his voice and ask, “I’m injured, but are you not willing to look at me a little longer?”

His voice even carried a trace of hurt.

She turned around. “Is it me who doesn’t want to look at you, or is it you who won’t let me have a look?”

He pursed his lips. “But, not only do you want to take a look at me, you’re worried about someone else.”

“So, which one is it? Are you letting me take a look or not?”

Alaric remained silent and only stared at her quietly, as if still unhappy about something. Victoria returned his gaze for a long while. If this were any other time, she would most likely turn around and leave with her usual temper even if he sulked.

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However, upon recalling that he had rescued her and was now gravely injured because

of her, she couldn't stop her heart from melting. She walked back to him and said softly,

“Okay, let me see your wound.”

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Victoria suddenly had a change of heart and took the initiative to approach Alaric to speak to him in a soothing tone. “I’m sorry for being too harsh earlier. You got hurt trying to save me, and I shouldn’t have spoken to you that way, so now let me see your injuries, okay?”

Since our last encounter, she has not spoken to me with such a soothing tone. At this realization, the tension in his heart softened as he listened to the subtle changes in her voice. He had missed her so much, and seeing her red lips parted before him, his gaze deepened instantly. His Adam’s apple bobbed, and he suddenly reached out and grabbed her waist.

Leaning down toward her, he said, “No need to apologize to me. I’m willing to **do** anything for you.” His voice was hoarse as he spoke, and he leaned forward, drawing her closer to his hot breath.

Her eyelashes fluttered, and she could tell he was about to kiss her. Nonetheless, the scent of blood brought her to her senses. Before he kissed her, she suddenly reached out and placed her hand between them.

Alaric paused, apparently not expecting Victoria to reach out to stop him. After a momentary daze, he did not retreat but kissed her delicate white palm. As his soft lips

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touched her palm, she was about to withdraw her hand, but before she could **react**, he quickly retreated and withdrew his hand from her waist.

As if he had swiftly disengaged from his emotions, he said indifferently, “I’ll tidy up and come back later.” After saying this, he turned and walked out.

She was perplexed by his response, and it wasn’t until he left and closed the door that she snapped out of it. Not only has he not shown me his injury, but he has also taken advantage of the situation. Thinking about this, she lowered her head and gazed at the palm he had kissed, where she could still feel his warmth. After a few moments of inaction, she recalled her next move.

Then, Victoria opened the door and left the room, but she did not see Alaric’s figure and was surprised that he had left so quickly. After closing the door, she walked forward and questioned the person patrolling and standing guard at the doorway. “Excuse me, where is Alaric? He just came out from here.”

“Miss Selwyn, Mr. Cadogan went to the left corridor.”

She glanced at the left corridor and thanked the guard before the man immediately replied, “You’re welcome, Miss Selwyn.”

As she approached the end of the corridor on the **left**, she **saw Terrance** rush into a

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room with the doctor she had seen earlier. She could tell from a glance that the doctor was there to treat Alaric. He must have been severely injured, but he doesn’t want **me t**
o

know; otherwise, he wouldn’t have run out so urgently. With this **in** mind, she quietly followed them.

On the other hand, when Terrance brought the doctor into the room, he didn’t close the

door completely, so Victoria could clearly hear their conversation.

“Mr. Cadogan, where are you injured? Let me take a look. The wound needs to be disinfected.”

There was silence for a while, followed by the doctor’s and Terrance’s audible gasps of shock.

“Why is the injury so severe?” Terrance exclaimed and angrily cursed Alaric’s opponent.

“This darn Bane! Mr. Cadogan, did he do this? He’s too ruthless, isn’t he?”

However, the response he received was a muffled groan.

At that moment, the doctor furrowed his brow as he cleaned the wound. “After your wound has been cleaned, Mr. Cadogan, you should avoid exposing **it** to water for the **next** few days; otherwise, the infection will worsen.”

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Meanwhile, Alaric sat impassively, other than a brief groan that he let out in response to the sudden pain he had no choice but to endure.

Terrance couldn’t help but wonder as he stood by his side. I might have thought the wound wasn’t painful if I hadn’t seen the cold sweat trickling down Mr. Cadogan’s forehead and along the protruding veins. Nonetheless, how could it not be painful, given that the wound is so deep that even a glance is horrifying? Then, he asked, “Mr. Cadogan, does Miss Selwyn know you’re injured like this? I heard you returned and went to find her without first treating your wound.”

After hearing this, Alaric hesitated, then pursed his lips and said, “She knows I’m injured, but she hasn’t seen my wound.”

Terrance exhaled a sigh of relief as he heard this and replied, “That’s good. Your wound

looks too horrifying. It's better not to let Miss Selwyn see it."

As soon as he finished speaking, he heard a voice on the other side of the door. "Is that so? What kind of wound is it that you dare not let me see? I want to see how horrifying this wound is."

The sudden appearance of a female voice caught their attention. When Terrance saw **the** figure, his face changed, and he quickly stepped forward to block her. "Miss Selwyn, why are you here?"

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As soon as he heard this, Alaric quickly buttoned his shirt and covered the wound the doctor was still treating.

When the doctor saw this, he sighed helplessly and said, "Mr. Cadogan, the wound hasn't been fully treated yet."

"I know." Alaric lowered his voice and looked at the doctor with an imposing gaze. "We'll continue later. Remember to cover for me."

The doctor was speechless upon hearing this. How does he expect me to cover up such a severe wound? It's hard to understand him. Shouldn't treating the wound be the first priority with such a serious injury? These young people are so concerned about their image. After all, Mr. Cadogan is the one who hired me, and since his injury is not life-threatening, delaying treatment for a short time would not endanger his life. At this realization, he stopped speaking and stood with arms crossed, awaiting further instructions.

On the other hand, Victoria stared blankly at Terrance, who was blocking her path.

“Can’t I come in? Mr. Levane, didn’t you say that you would inform me immediately when there’s news?”

“Yes, Miss Selwyn, but Mr. Cadogan just returned, and I didn’t have time **to** inform you, did I?”

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Then, she looked at him and tugged at her lips. “You’re right. You are unquestionably too busy to inform me, so I came on my own accord.”

He was speechless upon hearing her response. It feels like I’ve fallen right into Miss Selwyn’s trap.

6/6

While he was lost in his thoughts, she simply walked past him, and once he snapped out of it, he quickly moved forward to intercept her. “M–Miss Selwyn, Mr. Cadogan is currently tending to his wound, and the scene is quite gory. Perhaps... It would be best if you didn’t witness it.”

“Well, I’m curious to see just how gory it is,” Victoria said, looking at Terrance standing in her way. “Remember when he had severe gastric bleeding back then? Weren’t you the one begging me to go see him? You were afraid he might die. Now that he’s injured, I’m not allowed to see him?”

“Miss Selwyn...” He smiled awkwardly and continued, “It’s not that you can’t come in, but Mr. Cadogan-”

Before he could finish his words, a helpless voice from within spoke up. “Let her come **in.**”

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Terrance's expression changed upon hearing this, and he turned to look at Alaric, who nodded before stepping aside.

With no more obstacles, Victoria's gaze finally met Alaric's.

After briefly exchanging glances, he suddenly said, "You two can leave."

After hearing this, the doctor instinctively pointed at himself and asked, "Mr. Cadogan, you want us to leave?"

Alaric nodded in response.

"What about your wound?"

"My wound is nothing serious. We'll deal with it later."

"In that case, okay then-"

The doctor was about to agree, but Victoria, who was standing there, interrupted him.

"Deal with it now."

The three men looked at her simultaneously, and she walked over with **a stern face,**

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looking at Alaric with a somewhat displeased look. "You're injured, yet you're not

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treating it now. What are you thinking? Do you think the wound is not painful enough, or do you think you have too much blood and can afford to bleed a little longer?"

In response, he stammered, "I-I..."

"Doctor, where is he injured? Treat his wound now, and I'll watch." She completely ignored him and turned to instruct the doctor.

After hearing her serious tone, the doctor nodded instinctively and replied, "Okay, I'll treat his wounds now." Then, he went to get the supplies for treating wounds and approached Alaric, saying, "Mr. Cadogan, please take off your clothes."

However, Alaric couldn't think of anything to say, so he looked at Victoria and met her icy stare.

"Aren't you going to take your shirt off?"

After hearing this, he reluctantly unbuttoned his shirt while dragging his feet under her scrutiny.

In the meantime, Victoria had been standing next to Alaric when she saw this, and her anger drove her to sit down **next** to him, where she proceeded to strip off **his clothes**.

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Her actions weren't gentle, and he instantly grabbed her delicate wrist when she ripped off his clothes. Then, she raised her gaze and asked, "What?"

When confronted by her inquisitive gaze, he shook his head slightly and spoke with a sense of guilt. "It's nothing. Just be gentle."

Victoria was confused by his words and said, "Doctor, please treat his wound quickly."

"Okay, Miss Selwyn."

Afterward, the doctor began treating the wound that had already been partially treated.

At the time, she was seated very close to Alaric, and the stench of blood only grew stronger after she took a seat.

Hence, she frowned and looked at his injury, but before she could see anything, a pair of hands gently covered her eyes. She was taken aback and asked, "What are you doing?"

"There's nothing worth seeing. Let the doctor handle it."

"Even if I see it, I can't do anything to you," Victoria said.

Alaric pursed his thin lips and replied, "I'm afraid of scaring you."

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“**Do you** think I’m easily scared?” After saying this, she pulled his hand away, but after taking a quick look, she froze. She noticed an incised wound on Alaric’s abdomen that appeared to have been caused by a knife, and not only was it long, but it also appeared to be quite deep. Despite the doctor’s efforts, the wound kept bleeding, making it a horrifying sight.

After a few quick glances, she covered her mouth with her hand, and upon observing her reaction, he covered her eyes with his hand again. “You said you’re not easily scared, but you’re scared now?”

His tone was gentle, and he sounded like he was teasing her, but she could sense the helplessness in his voice. It was as if he were saying, “I kept you from seeing it for your own good. “Do you realize you were wrong now that you’ve finally seen it?”

I suspect he may have sustained a serious injury earlier, but given his penchant for pity,

he would not have prevented me from seeing it. Still, I never expected his wounds to be this severe. Thinking of this, Victoria bit her lower lip and suddenly pushed Alaric’s hand

away. Then, she looked at the doctor and asked, “Doctor, is this wound not life-threatening?”

“It’s not a life-threatening wound.”

“**Yet**, it looks horrifying.”

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“**Yes, it** does look horrifying, and if the wound were any deeper, it would be

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life-threatening. Fortunately, the wound hasn't reached that stage yet. So, remember to keep it dry after I bandage it."

Although the doctor's words sounded casual, Victoria was relieved that Alaric had not sustained a life-threatening injury while giving him a stern look.

In the meantime, he was speechless when he locked eyes with her.

After much deliberation, his gaze eventually settled on Terrance, who was standing nearby.

However, Terrance was confused. What's wrong with Mr. Cadogan?

If he could hear Alaric's thoughts, he would probably hear Alaric saying, "It's your fault. Why didn't you close the door when you brought the doctor? Why did you let her eavesdrop from the outside?"

After bandaging Alaric's wound, the doctor prescribed him some oral medication. The doctor then thoroughly examined Alaric's body, at Victoria's request, to ensure that there were no other injuries, and then left the room.

Then, he flipped the prescription medication instructions the doctor had prepared, **and** upon **seeing the** stack of white pills, he felt a headache developing. He had even considered discarding them later, but then he heard faint sounds from the doorway, **so** he looked up and saw Victoria walking to the door with the doctor, asking, "Are you sure there's no need for further examination? Perhaps, he's bleeding internally or has other hidden wounds."

A look of helplessness spread across the doctor's face as he responded, "Miss Selwyn, I've already conducted all the necessary examinations. If there were any other conditions, I would have examined them as well. Generally speaking, there shouldn't be any major problems."

“Generally speaking? So, you mean there might be other conditions? What are these other conditions?”

“Miss Selwyn, generally speaking, those other conditions shouldn’t exist. Also... If there are any other conditions, I’m here, and you can call me or come find me directly. So, please rest assured, nothing bad will happen.”

When she learned that the doctor would be staying, she felt relieved. She feared he would leave and something terrible would happen to Alaric before they could get medical assistance. “In that case, fine. Give me your phone number so I can save **it**.” The doctor smiled helplessly and said, “Alright, I’ll give you my phone number.”

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When Alaric saw them exchanging numbers at the door, he changed his mind about **717**

what **to do** with the pills. Oh well, I’d better keep them. If I don’t take my medicine like a good boy and start feeling better soon, she will go crazy worrying about me.

After Victoria finished exchanging phone numbers, she sent the doctor away, and Terrance exited the room shortly after that.

Only the two of them remained in the room. Alaric watched as she put away her phone and walked toward him with a serious expression, and he had a sense of foreboding. As he had anticipated, when she stopped in front of him, her gaze landed on his face. before turning to look at the pills beside him. Then, she picked up the pills and said, “right, your wound has been treated. Now, take your medicine.”

He was immediately rendered speechless.

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Even though it was past midnight, the room remained brightly lit, as if it were daytime.

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In the meantime, Alaric's clothing was partially undone, and he sat on the couch while observing his beloved woman meticulously reading the medication instructions.

Victoria sorted and organized the medication he needed to take, occasionally looking up and returning her gaze to the task at hand. Despite the discomfort of his abdominal wound, witnessing her concern and dedication as she studied the instructions filled him with immense satisfaction. He could tell that this satisfaction was not superficial, as it had been in the past, but was deeply ingrained in his heart.

As his gaze lingered on her face, she suddenly looked up and furrowed her brows. When he caught sight of her expression, he snapped out of his reverie and asked, "What's wrong?"

Then, she asked, "Have you eaten dinner?"

The unexpected query rendered him speechless, and he asked, "Why?"

"It seems like you haven't. These medications should be taken after meals, and **you-**"

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"Is **that** so?" Alaric seemed indifferent and suggested, "If they're meant to be taken after meals, let's save them for tomorrow."

"No." Victoria immediately refused and added, "Since the wound you sustained is so severe, you must take the medicine immediately." While speaking, she got up and headed straight for the kitchen.

When he heard this, his expression changed slightly. He stood up and intended to follow her, but she pressed him back onto the couch.

"Wait for me here. Let me see if I can find anything edible in the kitchen. You should

take your medication right after eating.”

After some hesitation, he inquired, “Why go through all this trouble? There won’t be anything edible in the kitchen at this hour.” After saying this, he grabbed the pills and said, “I’ll just take them on an empty stomach.”

“No.” She quickly rejected the idea and reminded him, “Have you forgotten about your gastric bleeding a while ago? Taking these pills on an empty stomach can cause more damage to your stomach and a return of your gastric issue. Are you seeking death by doing that, especially with these new injuries?”

On **the** other hand, Alaric had forgotten about his gastric bleeding, but Victoria’s reminder jogged his memory. Due to the circumstances, she was willing to consider looking at him. Suddenly, something clicked in his head, and he asked her quietly, “Is it because I got injured?”

However, this out-of-the-blue inquiry left her befuddled. “What?”

“Is it because I got injured that you care about me? If I hadn’t been injured today, would you...” As he reached this point, he paused slightly, then smiled self-deprecatingly.

“What I mean is, do you only care about me because I’m injured?”

At first, Victoria didn’t understand what Alaric was trying to express, but when he finished speaking, she finally understood his meaning. She eventually pieced together why he had such thoughts and realized it was likely because she had mentioned the incident involving gastric bleeding. During my previous hospital visits, I made it clear that I only cared about him because he was pitiful. Hence, I struck a deal with him then, explaining that my sole reason for visiting him was to see Grandma. He must have been

resentful about this, so he brought it up now. With this in mind, she lowered her gaze briefly before looking up at him and saying, “Even if you weren’t injured, I would still

come to see you. So, I'm going to the kitchen to get some food. You wait here, okay?"
Nonetheless, he pursed his lips and replied, "I'll accompany you."

"You're injured, and the doctor advised that I restrict your movement so you wouldn't

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aggravate your wound."

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"However, the doctor also stated that this was not a life-threatening injury. If the wound tears, it will simply hurt for a while. So, when you're done in the kitchen, we'll return."

Before Victoria could object, Alaric had stood up and said, "Let's go."

"Are you certain you want to accompany me? What about your injury-"

"Let's go." Seeing her still standing there, he said decisively, "Together, we can more quickly locate the food in the kitchen. **If** you keep me waiting, when will I be able to take the medicine tonight?"

Ultimately, she was convinced and went to the kitchen with him.

At one point, Terrance overheard a commotion inside the room and made a point of coming over to investigate. Later, when he learned they were heading to the kitchen, he proposed waking the cook up. As it was midnight, she politely declined, and he did not insist.

Meanwhile, after entering the kitchen, Victoria opened the refrigerator, which was fully stocked with ingredients. After a quick glance, she chose a few simple items, set a pot of water to boil, and prepared some ramen and condiments. Since it was already late,

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she only prepared a simple meal, and Alaric stood silently by her side, observing as she worked.

“It’s getting late, and eating too much will cause indigestion. So, before taking the medicine, you should eat something to fill your stomach.”

After hearing this, he obediently agreed, “Okay, I’ll listen to you.”

His response surprised her, but she didn’t pay it much mind as she turned off the stove.

Then, she served the ramen in a bowl in front of him. “Eat quickly.”

After that, Alaric looked at the bowl of plain ramen before him, which had only a few garnishes, vegetables, and a boiled egg. Yet, this seemingly insignificant bowl of noodles meant the world to him. After twirling a few strands of ramen on his fork and popping them into his mouth, he was pleasantly surprised to find it tasted just as good as it had in his mind. After taking a bite, he looked up at Victoria and said sincerely, “Thank you, it’s delicious.”

However, she was taken aback by his compliment and replied, “It’s just a bowl of plain ramen. There’s nothing special about it.”

After he had filled his stomach, she poured him a glass of warm water and placed the medications she had prepared before him. “All the pills are here, so take them all.”

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In the meantime, he stared at the small pack of pills before him, thinking about how

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bitter they were. If I don’t take them, she’ll be worried sick. With that in mind, he popped the pills into his mouth and swallowed them with half a glass of water. “Now, are you satisfied?” He shook the empty glass at her.

“Okay.” Victoria nodded. “The wound has been taken care of, and you’ve taken the medicine. You can rest now.”

When Alaric heard the word “rest,” he nodded and replied, “Okay.”

Together, they then ascended the stairs. When they reached the room’s doorway, she anticipated he would enter, but she noticed that he stopped and showed no sign of entering. Hence, she looked at him strangely. “Aren’t you going in?”

However, he looked at her and responded, “This isn’t my room.”

After hearing this, she repeated, “This isn’t your room? Then, your room-“While saying this, Victoria suddenly remembered that she was staying in Alaric’s room. This room **still** lingered with his scent because it was his room, which is why Terrance brought us here.

While she was contemplating, he had been staring at her. Then, he asked, “Didn’t they **bring you to my** room?”

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After Alaric said those words, Victoria fell silent.

Although they had lived in the same room before, it was all in the past.

They hadn’t seen each other for a long time, and even when they met again, they didn’t share a room.

Now, all of a sudden, they were supposed to live together.

When he saw her hesitating, Alaric lowered his gaze and reached out to hold her wrist.

“I’m seriously injured. Can you bear to leave me alone? What if I feel terrible in the middle of the night and am not aware of it?”

At his words, Victoria glanced at him. Although there was an element of self-pity in his

expression and words, she had to admit that what he said made sense.

He was indeed seriously injured; she had seen the severity of his wound with her own eyes. She had also asked the doctor when he left, and under normal circumstances, things should be fine. But what if something happened?

Well, that room was originally his, so she should let him go there. Besides, **the** most **important** thing was that he was injured and couldn't do much to **her**.

With that in mind, Victoria felt reassured.

"Let's go."

After seeing her relent, Alaric's dark eyes lit up with a hint of joy, and a pleased smile curled up at the corner of his lips. He walked with her and didn't let go of her hand.

When she entered the room, Victoria tidied up the things on the couch and then went into the room to check on Nicole and Nathan. Once she confirmed that they were sound asleep, she came back out.

Seeing her cautious movements, Alaric asked in a low voice, "Are they asleep?"

>

Victoria nodded. "They fell asleep a long time ago. They actually waited for you for a while, but they were tired from the day's activities."

Hearing her words, Alaric walked over and reached out to embrace her. "You've all worked hard. It's my fault for not protecting you."

Previously, Alaric's embrace had a fresh and pleasant scent with a **hint** of freshly cut grass, but now, all he emitted was the smell of blood mixed with faint sweat.

It wasn't particularly unpleasant, but whenever she smelled it, she couldn't help but think of the deep wound on his body.

Thinking about this, Victoria pushed him away and said, "You should change your

clothes first.”

Alaric asked, “Can’t stand the smell on me? Or are you disgusted by me?”

At his words, Victoria didn’t mince her words and said directly, “Both.”

Considering that he was injured and inconvenienced, Victoria even opened the wardrobe to find clothes for him. She thereafter handed him a new shirt and pants.

Alaric looked at the clothes in his hand and said, “Something’s missing.”

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Reminded by him, Victoria realized what was missing. She hadn’t paid much attention when she took them out earlier.

In any case, he was injured, so she decided to do her best as a good person.

With that in mind, Victoria opened the wardrobe again and asked, “Where is it?”

“On the top shelf.”

Victoria opened the top shelf and saw the neatly organized undergarments inside. She **didn’t** dare to look too closely and simply picked one to give to him.

“That should do. Go change now.”

After saying that, Victoria closed the wardrobe with a bang, and the soft smile that extended to Alaric’s ears made her face flush.

She bit her lower lip. “Aren’t you going to change? How long do you plan to stand here?”

“But I’m injured. Are you really not going to help me?”

Upon hearing this, Victoria turned around, unable to bear it any longer, and looked at him. “You’re injured, not disabled. Your hands and feet are still functional.”

Seeing her on the verge of exploding, Alaric clicked his tongue and finally reached out to pat her head. “Okay, I’ll go change.”

He couldn’t provoke her anymore. If he kept provoking her, she would definitely

explode.

Alaric took the clothes and went to the bathroom. Victoria originally wanted to wait outside for him, but she suddenly thought of something and followed him before he **entered** the bathroom. She reminded him, “You haven’t forgotten what the doctor said, **right? The** wound should not come into contact with water for now.”

As Alaric was about to close the bathroom door, he heard her sudden remark and decided to stay where he was. Without moving, he stared at her. “He did inform me. I remember everything. But if you’re worried, why don’t you come in and watch over me personally?”

Upon hearing this, Victoria instinctively replied, “Dream on.”

Afterward, she turned and left.

Alaric watched her figure and slowly closed the bathroom door.

Once the door closed, the expression on Alaric’s face instantly collapsed. The smile that was present on his lips a moment ago had completely disappeared, leaving only his prominent veins and cold sweat.

The wound was deep, and it hurt even to stay still, let alone raise his hand and make various movements while changing clothes.

”

When they were together earlier, Alaric had been enduring the pain because he didn’t **want** her to worry.

The shirt he took off was soaked through. He took just one glance before tossing it directly into the nearby washing machine.

Normally, his shirts needed dry cleaning, but given the current situation, he couldn’t care about that anymore. He just threw them in to eliminate any evidence.

After he was done changing, he walked out of the bathroom.

Meanwhile, Victoria was still waiting for him. Seeing him in dry clothes, she approached him and gave him a thorough look from head to toe before asking, "The wound didn't come into contact with water, right?"

"After all your reminders, do you think it would?" As he spoke, he raised his hand to check the time on his wristwatch. "It's getting late. You should rest."

Victoria instinctively asked, "What about you?"

"I'll rest too."

Although he said he would rest, Victoria remained standing in place without moving.

"**What's** wrong?" Alaric teased when he saw her standing still. "Can't bear to leave me? Want to stay and keep me company?"

Victoria didn't say anything; she simply looked at him silently for a while, then lowered **her** gaze. "No. I'll go rest."

A smile appeared on Alaric's lips. "Go ahead."

A

He stood there, not saying anything to hold her back until she walked into the room **and** closed the door. Only then did his tense shoulders seem to relax.

He looked at the closed door in front of him, exhaled softly, and then slowly walked toward the direction of the couch. Subsequently, he sat down on the couch.

With his injuries as they were, the ideal scenario would have been to meet her briefly after treating the wound and then live by himself. Being together with her would only cause her unnecessary worry, but as soon as he saw her, he didn't want to leave her anymore. He couldn't leave her. That was why he followed her to this room and now lay on the couch.

One could say that he brought this upon himself. Now, he was sitting on the couch, knowing she was inside but unable to be with her. This made his heart ache unbearably.

Nevertheless, he managed to save her.

Regardless of anything else, as long as she was under his watchful eye at this moment,

he was satisfied.

With this thought in mind, Alaric chuckled softly with his lips curved.

Just as he was preparing to rest on the couch for the night, the door that had just been closed opened again. Victoria came over with a pillow and a blanket. After walking in, she placed them next to him. He thought these things were for himself, but she lay down on them in the next moment.

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The couch was large, so even when Victoria lay on it, there was still a little space left.

Alaric sat there, watching her lie down behind him and quickly occupy more than **half** of the space.

He pursed his thin lips and eventually couldn't control himself from asking, "Aren't those for me?"

Victoria lay there, meeting his gaze.

"Yes."

"Then?"

If those were for him, why was she lying here? If those weren't for him, why did she say those were?

Alaric couldn't understand.

Just when he was baffled, Victoria suddenly spoke, "I'm here to accompany you."

Alaric paused, and after a moment, his gaze underwent a slight change. If his eyes **were** *clear* and bright before, they now became dark and gloomy. His gaze locked **onto her like** a hunter targeting its prey.

Despite knowing that his wound would cause pain if he moved too much, he still leaned closer to her. Lowering his voice, he asked, "You want to accompany me? Are you sure?"

Feeling the sudden warmth approaching, Victoria instinctively shrank back, and her heartbeat quickened. Realizing that his thin lips were close to hers, she quickly pulled the blanket in front of her, covering her mouth and preventing any sudden attack from Alaric.

As expected, her action caught Alaric's attention. He looked at her with raised eyebrows.

"You came over to accompany me, so what are you afraid of?"

His words provoked Victoria's dissatisfaction, and she retorted, "I'm worried that you might have a fever at night or some other problem. I'm here to accompany you, not for anything else. If you dare to have any other thoughts, I'll leave right now."

After Victoria finished speaking, as if afraid that he wouldn't believe her, she stood up, wanting to take the blanket and leave.

"Don't go." **Alaric** reached out to stop her. Due to the urgency of the movement, **it** seemed to strain his wound, causing him to groan heavily. Then, because of the severe pain, his movement stopped.

Hearing his groan, Victoria's expression also changed. Just as she was about to say something, she saw him force a pale smile as he looked at her.

"Why are you angry? Look **at** my current state. With every slight movement I make, **it**

hurts so much. What can I do for you? Even if I really want to do something to you, my body doesn't allow it."

Victoria looked at him. Although he was saying that, his eyes appeared deep and covetous. His body was weak, that was true, but his aura seemed as if he could pounce on her and devour her in the next second.

Thinking of this, Victoria said, "Then don't look at me like this."

Upon hearing this, Alaric paused and then asked in return, "How am I looking at you?"

"Just like you are now."

Although he hadn't done anything to her, his gaze was more embarrassing than **anything** he could do to her.

During intimate moments, at least their eyes didn't meet, but now, he kept staring at **her**.

Such a gaze made her feel a little overwhelmed.

Alaric suddenly laughed softly.

"Snowball, isn't this request a bit too much? I can't touch or hold the woman I love who's

sitting next to me, and now I can't even look at her?"

After speaking, his gaze became even more provocative.

Victoria was speechless.

She couldn't take it anymore.

She had to sit up on her knees and push Alaric's head to the other side, making him look elsewhere.

"Can't you just look elsewhere?"

As Alaric's head was pushed to the side, he found it amusing. In less than a second, he

turned his head back, and his thin lips brushed against the palm of her hand as she hadn't had time to move it away.

The soft touch on her palm made Victoria instinctively want to retract her hand, but **before** she could react, it was held tightly by Alaric.

The moment their skin touched, Victoria felt the warmth in his palm burning like fire. He lowered his head and reverently kissed the palm of her hand.

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Victoria felt an itchy sensation in her heart. She wanted to pull her hand back, but Alaric's grip was strong, and she had no way to free her hand. She could only watch as his thin lips slowly moved from her palm to her fingers.

During this time, Victoria struggled in vain. Although Alaric was currently injured, his strength was still beyond what she could match. The most important thing was that Victoria was afraid that struggling too much would affect his wound. In this state, she felt dazed...

It was only when he finished kissing every finger, planted a kiss on her neck, and wanted to go further down that Victoria suddenly came to her senses.

"No..."

"No!" Victoria suddenly grabbed his greedy hands.

"You're still injured."

Alaric's Adam's apple bobbed up and down, and he looked at her with deep eyes.

His voice was incredibly hoarse as he said, "It's fine; it's just a minor injury."

Just a minor injury?

Victoria could hardly believe it. When she was tending to his wound earlier, he was in so much pain that he broke out in a cold sweat. The veins on his forehead even bulged

out. Moreover, if the wound were any deeper, it could have been fatal. Now, he was saying it was just a minor injury?

“No!” Victoria firmly refused to let him continue. She pressed her hand against his chest, not allowing him to approach her even the slightest bit.

At this moment, for Alaric, although the wound still hurt, another emotion began to dominate. He now only cared about whether this could continue.

As for the pain from his wound, he had long pushed it to the back of his mind.

“Snowball.”

Alaric repeatedly called Victoria’s nickname in a low voice near her ear, his voice and **tone** intimate beyond measure.

“**Can** I kiss you a little longer? I promise I won’t do anything to you.”

Won’t do anything to me?

M

There must be something wrong with me if I were to believe his words.

7/8

Earlier, he said that he wouldn’t do anything to me because he’s injured. Look at what happened next! He kissed me for quite some time and couldn’t keep his hands to himself.

Based on her understanding of him, if they continued, he would probably completely lose control.

Moreover, they were outside of the bedroom...

Even though the two children were already fast asleep, what if they woke up and came out? If they saw all this, the consequences would be extremely severe.

Considering this, Victoria became even more determined to reject him.

“No!”

Seeing that Alaric was looking at her reluctantly, Victoria had to say, “Nicole and Nathan

could wake up at any moment. Do you want them to see us?”

Upon hearing the names of the two children, Alaric seemed to regain some clarity. He then looked at Victoria’s fair face and slightly swollen lips. He endured his desire for a moment before he couldn’t help but say, “Then... Let’s find another place?”

“That won’t work either. I don’t feel at ease leaving them to sleep here alone.”

This won’t work. What else could Alaric say? After all, Nicole and Nathan were his children. If they woke up in the middle of the night and saw what they were doing, it would definitely have a negative impact on their minds.

Considering this, Alaric gradually regained his rationality, and certain emotions slowly subsided.

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Seeing that Alaric finally understood, Victoria finally breathed a sigh of relief. She got up to pour herself a glass of water. When she turned her head, she saw that Alaric’s forehead was covered in a cold sweat.

“You’re sweating so much. Is your wound okay?” While asking, Victoria reached out and touched his forehead. “Are you running a fever?”

The temperature she felt seemed to be high, but it didn’t feel like a fever.

“I’m not running a fever.” Alaric calmly replied as he looked at her. “As for why the temperature is higher, think about what we did just now.”

Victoria was speechless.

After hearing the last sentence, she instantly understood his meaning, and she withdrew her hand.

Well, she finally understood why his temperature was high but not like a fever. However, his shamelessness was beyond imagination if he could openly say it like this.

“Go to sleep.” Alaric pointed to where she had been lying before, indicating for her to lie down again.

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2/8

However, after what happened just now, Victoria hesitated. If she lay down again, what if he...

“**This** time, I won’t do anything to you. I promise,” Alaric said.

“Your promises mean nothing. You said that you couldn’t do anything to me in your current condition just now,” Victoria retorted.

“Well, that was before. Besides, I didn’t promise anything back then, did I?” Alaric said.

Victoria was dumbfounded.

That made sense when he put it that way.

She hesitated for two seconds. In the end, she crawled over and lay down in her original position. As soon as she lay down, Alaric’s hand reached out.

Victoria’s expression changed, thinking that he wanted to do something to her, but she

saw that he just wanted to pull up the blanket to cover her.

His movement wasn't very smooth, and it was evident that his wound was painful.

Victoria furrowed her brows slightly and reached out to pull the blanket, then said to him, "Well, you should lie down and sleep too. You don't need to worry about **me**

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anymore."

After speaking, she pulled the blanket away slightly, leaving a spot for him.

Alaric chuckled softly at this gesture, and after a while, he lay down beside her.

3/8

To make room for him, Victoria lay on her side. When he lay down, her entire back was tightly pressed against the couch to make more space for him.

But when he lay down, Victoria realized a problem. As the space was too small, when he lay down, not only was her back pressed against the couch, but her front was also pressed against him.

It would have been fine if it were other body parts, but there were some parts that felt awkward. It made Victoria try to move back as much as possible.

After a short while, Alaric raised his arm and pulled her into his embrace.

"What about your wound..."

"It's on the other side." Alaric's voice was low as he said, "Using this arm to hold you **won't** affect it."

Victoria looked up and saw that his wound was indeed on the other side, so she

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relaxed.

“But **if** we stay like this for a long time, your arm will get sore.”

“It’ll just be sore; it won’t break.”

“You never know,” Victoria retorted. “If the blood circulation is cut off for too long, it could result in your disability.”

4/8

She didn’t know whether he really listened to what she said or not, but she heard a dry laugh from him, followed by, “If I do become disabled, will you look at me more?”

Although she knew he was mostly joking when he said these words, she felt unhappy and found it inauspicious.

“No. If you become disabled, then I won’t want you anymore.”

“Really?”

“Really.”

“Well then, I’ll do my best not to become disabled...”

“It’s good that you know...”

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5/8

For more than five years, **the** two of them rarely had moments like this. They were now

just lying together in peace and talking about trivial things.

Although their conversation was trivial, Victoria felt a sense of tranquility in her heart that she had never felt before.

When she raised her head, she could see his perfect jawline, and the air around her was filled with his scent when she breathed.

After changing clothes, he no longer had the unpleasant smell of blood, only the familiar scent she was used to, which gave her a sense of comfort.

With that in mind, her restless hand gradually moved forward and gently wrapped around him. She thereafter closed her eyes and leaned against his chest.

“I’m sleepy,” she whispered softly.

“Then go to sleep.”

“Mm. If you’re not feeling well, wake me up.”

“Okay.”

Gradually, Alaric heard the sound of her even and steady breathing.

She had fallen asleep.

Alaric covered her with the blanket to prevent her from catching a cold after falling asleep. However, he accidentally touched his wound, causing him to nearly inhale sharply in pain.

As Victoria was beside him, he didn’t want to wake her up, so he endured the pain.

He looked down at the wound on his body and let out a soft sigh.

Originally, such a wound would be difficult for him to endure, but because Victoria was by his side and in his arms, this wound didn't seem as suffering anymore. Instead, it felt like a blessing.

As he thought about this, a beautiful smile appeared on his lips.

If Terrance knew about his thoughts at this moment, he would probably give him a disdainful look and say, "Pfft, what a lovesick fool."

The next day, when Nathan woke up, he turned his head and saw Nicole sleeping in a topsy-turvy manner. He got up and covered her with the blanket, intending to let her sleep a little longer after the fright they had last night.

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7/8

However, just as he finished covering her, Nicole woke up and stared at him with sleepy

eyes.

"Nathan?"

Seeing that she was awake, Nathan helped her up. Nicole was still not fully awake and sat there rubbing her eyes. "Nathan, why did you wake up so early?"

After speaking, she looked around and noticed that Victoria wasn't by their side. Hence, she decided to ask again, "Where's Mommy?"

Nathan also didn't see Victoria sleeping with them when he woke up, so he planned to get out of bed and check, but he didn't expect Nicole to wake up at that moment.

“I don’t know; Mommy wasn’t here when I woke up.”

As soon as Nicole heard that, her eyes widened. “Could it be that Mommy didn’t sleep with us last night?”

Nathan shook his head, indicating that he didn’t know.

“Ah, then, Nathan.... Let’s go find Mommy.”

“Okay.”

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8/8

The two little ones got out of bed together, got dressed, put on their shoes, and walked toward the living room.

When they opened the door, sunlight streamed in, making them squint instinctively.

After a moment, when they opened their eyes again, they saw two figures on the couch opposite.

The figures were embracing each other as they slept—it was Victoria and Alaric.

The first thing

Nicole saw made her cover her mouth in surprise. Her eyes widened, and

she then whispered to Nathan, “Nathan, look! Mr. Night and Mommy are sleeping together!”

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