

## Departure with a Belly Chapter 536

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Don't Tell Me She Lost Her Memories

Could it be that something had happened between them in the past?

Of course, Victoria didn't ask about that straight away, for she felt that even if she did ask, Alaric wouldn't tell her.

She would bring it up later.

The two found a hotel nearby and settled in. Fearing that Victoria would be bored, Alaric wanted to take her shopping at a mall nearby so that he could buy her something she liked.

However, Victoria didn't agree to it, rejecting his offer on the spot.

"You've barely recovered, so why are you ignoring your wounds already? When will you learn?"

Victoria sounded a little harsh. "You have to rest and recuperate. You know what that means, don't you?"

She was talking to him angrily with her cheeks puffed up. Alaric tried to listen to her earnestly, but he found her too adorable, so in his mischief, he couldn't help but reach out and pinch her puffy cheeks with his large hands.

Victoria was halfway through her words when he suddenly pinched her cheeks. She blinked in bewilderment.

*What did he mean by that?*

"What are you doing?"

She subconsciously placed her hand on Alaric's arm, pushing him away as she said, "Let go! Don't get ahead of yourself. I'm being serious here, alright?"

Alaric pinched her a few more times, then raised his eyebrows. "I'm listening to you attentively, you

know."

Victoria fell silent.

He didn't look serious at all!

Who on earth would be listening attentively while pinching the speaker's cheeks?

"You looked too serious, so I wanted to help you relax."

With that, Alaric gave her another few pinches before letting go of her.

"Fine. Since you want me to recuperate, we won't go out later. We'll just rest in the hotel."

"That's more like it..." Victoria rubbed her cheeks as she muttered in a small voice.

The two quickly got bored in the hotel, so Victoria went to the balcony to look at the scenery.

The hotel they were in had huge balconies that overlooked an open-air swimming pool. The swimming pool was huge, and the water glistened under the sun like a pond in the afternoon.

It was winter, so no one was swimming at the moment. Hence, the huge swimming pool became part of the backdrop instead.

Victoria leaned against the railing as she silently gazed at the water in the swimming pool below her. She felt her heart gradually turning calm as well.

Just then, a phone started ringing behind her. Not only that, it sounded very close as well.

It was

only then that Victoria realized Alaric had come out. He was leaning against the door of the balcony as he looked at her.

His phone was ringing in his pocket, so he lowered his head and retrieved his phone.

When Alaric saw the incoming call, he was stunned for a moment. However, he didn't say anything or leave as he answered the call in Victoria's presence.

"Hello?"

His voice was cold and indifferent, and no emotions could be gleaned from it:

Victoria only glanced at him before looking away, then continued gazing at the pool water downstairs.

Alaric stared at her as he listened to a female voice interrogating him over the phone.

"Alaric, are you with Victoria? Why can't I reach her number? Have you failed to protect her again? Alaric, I'm telling you, if you let anything happen to her again, I'll—"

Before Summer could finish speaking, Alaric said, "She's right here with me. Would you like to talk to her?"

The woman's voice stopped at once, for Summer probably didn't expect him to say that.

"Is she with you? Pass the phone to her right now."

"I can do that, but there's one thing I must warn you about."

"What is it?" Summer asked, bewildered.

Alaric glanced at Victoria, then said in a low voice, "She may not remember you."

Summer fell silent.

After a moment of deathly silence on the other end of the phone, Summer exploded. “What do you mean?! What’s that about her not remembering me? Don’t tell me she lost her memories!”

“She did.”

Summer was almost leaping in anger. Ever since she went back, she fell out of touch with Victoria, so she didn’t know what had happened on Victoria’s side. She thought that Victoria was safe. She was also busy with work, so much so that she couldn’t even think about anything else. She only called Victoria when things had calmed down.

When she called Victoria, however, she realized that the call wouldn’t go through.

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Summer still had Alarie’s number from when she was overseas. Even though she was scared of him, her bestie gave her the courage to make the call.

Unexpectedly, the news that awaited her was the fact that Victoria had lost her memories.

What had happened while Summer was caught up in work?

How did things suddenly turn out like this?

Summer wanted to interrogate Alaric, but after some thought, she said, “Never mind, just pass the phone to Victoria. Let me talk to her.”

Since Alaric was standing nearby, Victoria could hear everything he said. She thought that it was something related to work at first, so she didn’t listen in, but later on, she overheard some information about her.

After that, Alaric passed his phone to her and said, “It’s your friend.”

After a pause, Alaric continued, “You might remember a little when you talk to her. Give it a try.”

Victoria didn't say anything as she took the phone.

"Hello?"

"Victoria!"

When Summer heard Victoria's voice, she was overwhelmed as she said, "Boo, I can finally hear your voice! How are you right now? Are you okay?"

Even though Victoria couldn't remember anyone or anything that happened in the past, she felt an unknown sense of familiarity and intimacy when she heard Summer's voice.

Also, when she heard the worried and anxious tone in Summer's voice, Victoria felt her nose tingling. She subconsciously had the urge to vent all her frustrations to Summer.

"I-"

Victoria choked.

On the other end of the line, Summer instantly felt her heart ache for Victoria.

"Don't cry, Boo. I'm here. You don't remember me, do you? Nonetheless, you find me familiar, right?"

When Victoria heard Summer's words, she subconsciously nodded. Then, she realized that Summer couldn't see her, so she could only speak.

"Yes."

"Wow, so it's true that you don't remember me at all. I'll tell you, then. I'm Summer Jones, and I'm your best friend..."

Summer began her speech. She started by introducing herself, then told Victoria how they met and how they became besties. She also talked about how Victoria had helped her.

Summer was quite talkative, and she ceaselessly chattered on the other end of the line. Victoria

At first, she felt tears welling up in her eyes and a pitiful weight on her chest when she heard Summer's voice. Later on, as Summer talked even more, the weight on her heart slowly disappeared.

After her lengthy speech, Summer asked, "Do you remember me now?"

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No Regrets at All

Victoria realized that she was still clueless about the things Summer talked about, but Summer sounded quite eager.

She felt a little awkward, and for a moment, she didn't know how she should answer the woman.

Noticing her silence, Summer probably realized something. Her voice sounded a little sad as she said, "Never mind, it's okay if you don't remember. I'll be resigning soon, anyway. Wait for me. I'll go back and spend more time with you. I'll tell you more about the past, so maybe you'll remember by then."

Victoria latched onto some information in Summer's words.

"Are you resigning?"

"Yeah, it's too tiring for me to work in my current company, so I've already submitted my resignation report. I'm going back after it's approved. We'll go shopping and watch movies. Also, I haven't met Nicole and Nathan in forever! How are they now?"

At the mention of Nicole and Nathan, a loving expression entered Victoria's eyes.

"They're with their grandma right now. They're doing pretty well."

"Their grandma?"

Summer was instinctively about to ask whether she was referring to Alaric's mother. How could Victoria allow her to take care of Nicole and Nathan?

In the past, Victoria was scared that they would snatch her children away, after all.

However, before Summer voiced those words, she remembered that Victoria had amnesia, so she quickly stopped herself.

Alas, there were some things she shouldn't say. Victoria didn't have any memories of the past, so mentioning these things would only complicate matters.

Also, even if Summer told Victoria everything that happened in the past, it wasn't guaranteed that Victoria would make the right choice. After all, Victoria was the one who experienced all those things. As Victoria's best friend, Summer might know the entire process, but she couldn't delve into Victoria's heart and unearth the hidden thoughts in the latter's mind.

If she wasn't careful with her words right now, it would only confuse Victoria even more.

At that thought, Summer could only say, "Alright, I got it. Wait for me to come back. I'll contact you

then."

"Okay." Victoria curved her lips slightly. Her voice was gentle as she said, "When will you be back?"

"I'm not sure, but it'll be very soon after I get the approval. I still have to hand my work over, though."

"If so, then you probably won't be back so soon."

"Well, I'll do my best to hurry up. I won't let my dear Boo wait too long."

The two chatted some more, all of them topics between besties. Summer even asked questions about Victoria's current relationship with Alaric. Every time she voiced her ques

tions, she would ask warily, “Are you sure that you’re not on speaker right now? Don’t let him hear anything I just said,

Victoria wasn’t using the hands-free mode, but her surroundings were quiet, and Alaric was very close to her as he leaned against the door of the balcony. Summer’s voice was very clear as well, so Victoria didn’t know if Alaric could hear her.

She only knew that he was constantly frowning, and he was always watching her.

“I’m very sure. Don’t worry.”

Summer sighed in relief. “Good,”

Summer was about to continue chatting with Victoria when another call came in. When Summer saw the incoming call, her expression shifted a little as she said to Victoria, “I have something else to deal with right now, so I’ll call you again another time, Boo,”

“Alright, go ahead.”

After hanging up, Summer stared at the name displayed on the screen—Mr. Ludson.

Ever since he helped her and Victoria last time, Summer treated him with a better attitude. After she came back, she also changed his contact name from “The Devil” to ‘Mr. Ludson’ as a sign of

respect.

After waiting for a moment, Summer finally picked up the call with a smile. “Mr. Ludson?”

Her cheery tone caused the caller to fall silent before asking, “What’s the occasion?”

The question caught Summer by surprise. She replied subconsciously, “Huh?”

“Are you happy because you’re resigning soon?”

Summer was speechless.



If it were before, she would probably retort by saying, "Of course! How can I not be happy to quit my job and go back to my hometown right away?"

Nonetheless, he had helped her before.

Thinking about this, Summer couldn't find it in her to be rude. He had helped her, after all. If she retorted cheekily, she would be the one at fault.

Hence, she could only switch *her* tune.

"No, it's not that. I'm happy because I was just on the phone with my bestie."

Erik asked, "Was it Victoria?"

"Yeah." Summer nodded.

After the question, the two seemed to fall into silence. Sometime later, Summer asked in a small voice, "Mr. Ludson, did you want to talk to me about something?"

"I saw your resignation report."

"That's right, I'm thinking of resigning. We need to submit our resignation reports in advance, right? However, Mr. Ludson, I only submitted mine a few hours ago, so how do you know about it already?"

The question caught Erik off guard. A moment later, he finally said, "IIR told me about it"

He didn't mention that as soon as Summer submitted her resignation report, it was forwarded to him right away.

"Well, since you've seen it, Mr. Ludson, why don't you approve it right now? I won't have to wait for long, then."

When she submitted her resignation report, Summer thought that she would only get the approval after a few days. She didn't expect that Erik would call her after a few hours, so she grabbed the golden chance and told Erik to approve it.

Erik was speechless.

Not getting a response, Summer called out again, "Mr. Ludson?"

There was still no response. Summer took the phone away from her ear to see that the call was still ongoing, so she felt even more puzzled. They were still on the call, so why weren't there any sounds?

Was her phone acting up?

Just as Summer was about to hang up in confusion, trying to see if she could redial the number, Erik's voice finally rang out.

"Are you sure that you want to resign? Have you thought things through?"

His voice sounded cold and practically emotionless.

Summer, however, didn't sense anything off about it as she nodded.

"Of course. If not, I wouldn't have submitted my resignation report, right, Mr. Ludson? If you're free right now, why don't you sign it for me? I can only start transferring my work after I get the approval."

Her voice was light-hearted, and she didn't sound like she had any regrets at all about leaving the

company.

Erik was silent for a moment before asking, "Is it the pay?"

For a moment, Summer couldn't register what she was hearing.

"What?"

Summer didn't say anything.

"

She probably didn't expect him to double her pay, so she was frozen on the spot. Some time later, she finally found her voice.

"Mr. Ludson, it's not about the pay..."

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It's a Personal Reason

Why else, then? Are the benefits not good enough? If raising your pay doesn't work, why don't I promote you too?"

Summer was speechless.

"Or do you

have any other requests? Feel free to voice them out."

Summer pursed her lips. She wasn't sure if she was hearing things, but even though Erik's voice sounded calm and normal, she could sense his anxiety from his gradually increasing words.

Anxiety?

Is it because I'm *resigning*?

The thought flashed across Summer's mind before she quickly denied it.

No, the Ludson Corporation didn't lack talent at all, and she wasn't the only one who could handle her current position either.

Also, she didn't have many strengths save for her willingness to work hard. Erik could get all the talent he needed on the market. As soon as she resigned, someone else would quickly take over the position.

Those thoughts circled her mind before Summer quickly realized that she was overthinking it. How could Erik be reluctant to let her go?

Even if that were the case, he probably felt that he would have one less person to exploit.

Thinking about this, Summer returned to her senses and said softly, "That's not it, Mr. Ludson."

Erik was stunned, and he didn't say a word.

"The company has been very good to me. I haven't worked with a company that has offered better incentives in the past few years."

It was true that she always called him 'the devil. After all, work could get too much to handle at times. He would sometimes tell her to go on a business trip with him or work overtime.

However, in terms of salary, he never once mistreated her. Also, whenever she asked him to reimburse the fees she had to pay because of work, he would sign it right away. The quarterly and annual bonuses were lucrative as well, and she also had decent incentives while working there. What was more, there was always some afternoon tea to grab.

All in all, save for her days off, she experienced much better treatment here compared to other companies.

However...

"If this is the company with the best incentives so far, why would you resign?"

There was one question Erik didn't ask. He wanted to ask if she had found a company that offered even better incentives and if that was why she wanted to leave.

If so, then he could raise her pay. It wouldn't be a problem.

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Summer never thought that her resignation could induce such questions. She pretended that he was just concerned about her.

“Mr. Ludson, this has nothing to do with how the company treats me. It’s a personal reason.”

After she mentioned that, Erik subconsciously asked, “What reason is that?”

Immediately, Erik seemed to realize that the question wasn’t appropriate. After all, if it was a personal reason, it would involve her privacy.

If he asked that, it felt like he was prying into her privacy.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to pry. If it’s a personal reason, and if it’s something the company can help with, perhaps

Summer knew what he meant. She maintained a light tone as she said, “I know, Mr. Ludson. You won’t pry into other people’s privacy. Still, the company can’t help with that.”

Now that things had come to this point, if Erik continued asking, it would seem rude of him.

The cold and calm man sat in the office, holding his phone with one hand as he stared at the resignation report in front of him. The applicant’s name was Summer Jones.

There was also a photo attached to the report. It was Summer’s ID photo.

The girl in the photo had a clean face and a refreshing smile that went well with her bright eyes. The photo looked like it was taken many years ago, for the girl in the photo still had a youthful aura about her.

He looked at the photo of the girl, then recalled how she looked after all those years toiling for the company. He pursed his thin lips and asked again, “Are you sure that you want to resign?”

“Yes.”

The girl’s voice sounded firm as it rang out from the other end of the line.

By the looks of it, she was determined to leave this company.

“Alright, I got it. I’ll deal with your resignation as soon as possible.”

“Thank you, Mr. Ludson.”

Erik didn’t hang up. The girl was probably waiting for him to hang up first, so after waiting a while, she must have realized that he hadn’t ended the call yet, so she asked in a slightly surprised tone, “Mr. Ludson? I’ll be hanging up now, okay?”

The girl’s voice sounded careful. Erik pursed his thin lips, debating if he should say something. However, when the words reached his lips, he couldn’t utter a word. As such, he could only hum in

response.

Seeing that he had agreed, the girl seemed to have let out a sigh of relief. “Goodbye, Mr. Ludson. Remember to sign off my resignation report, alright?”

After expressing her thanks, she ended the call.

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As Erik listened to the beeping tone, he put down his phone and picked up a pen he left on the desk.

When Erik took the pen, his expression was a little dazed.

Just then, knocks sounded on the door of the office.

“Come in.”

His assistant walked in and caught sight of the resignation report on Erik’s desk. There was a slightly surprised look on his face.

“Mr. Ludson, I see that you’ve already received the resignation report.”

“Yes.”

The assistant had been handling a few matters outside, and he passed by the HR Department on his way back. He happened to overhear them talking about Summer's resignation, and his expression instantly changed as he hurried upstairs to tell Erik about the news. He didn't expect that her resignation report would be sent to Erik already.

Meanwhile, Erik was holding a pen, looking like he was about to sign it.

The assistant only glanced at it before saying, "I'll talk to her."

"It's okay." Erik halted him in a cold voice.

Erik's voice caused the assistant to pause in his tracks. When the assistant turned around, he saw Erik holding the pen and signing his name on the approval line of the resignation report.

When the assistant saw that, he was a little stunned.

"Are you approving it just like that, Mr. Ludson? Aren't you going to... ask about it at least?"

He was away for just a few hours, so what exactly happened while he was gone? How did things suddenly turn out like this?

Sadly, Erik didn't answer his question. Instead, Erik handed the signed resignation report to him.

"Send it to the HR Department."

The assistant was confused, but he quickly took the resignation report. Then, his gaze fell upon the pen in Erik's hand/

The pen was pure black, and its edges were starting to whiten from the friction. It was obvious that the pen was losing its color after being used for a long time.

The

pen

didn't match Erik's net worth at all, for it was just too cheap.

After all, which president of a company would use a worn-out pen?

However, Erik continued using it, and perhaps only the assistant knew the reason behind that.

Summer was the one who had gifted Erik this pen.

Back then, there was a project where Summer worked together with Erik and his assistant. She worked so hard that she almost collapsed, and when the project succeeded in the end, she was given a large bonus.

Summer was elated, so she used the bonus to buy gifts for Erik and his assistant.

After she bought the pen, she found out that Erik had a custom-made pen of his own, and the one she bought was from a lesser-known brand. She was instantly embarrassed, and when she tried to take the gift back, Erik accepted it right away.

Thanks for the gift. It's very nice of you."

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Transfer

There wasn't anything special about that pen.

Summer was impartial when she bought the gifts. The two pens she bought were of the same price, and the only difference was the style.

The pen that the assistant received was broken long ago after use.



He didn't have special feelings for Summer, so the pen Summer gave him was just a normal gift.

Since it was nothing special, if it broke down or stopped functioning smoothly, he would discard it without another thought.

As such, the assistant quickly got himself a new pen. However, one day, he suddenly noticed that Erik was still using the pen.

When he noticed it back then, he couldn't help but say, "Mr. Ludson, are you still using that pen? Mine is no longer working, so I tossed it out right away. Summer received such a huge bonus, so she should at least buy a better one. Look, your pen is getting scratched from use. Why don't you buy a new pen, Mr. Ludson?"

When he said those words, he wasn't thinking much, so he didn't sound quite respectful.

When he finished speaking, he suddenly sensed that his surroundings had turned a little colder. By the time he looked up, he saw Erik staring coldly at him.

"You have a lot of time on your hands, don't you?"

The assistant fell silent. He thought that he had spoken too much and accidentally incurred Erik's wrath, so he didn't dare say anything unnecessary after that.

pen

As time passed by, the assistant noticed that Erik still using the pen, and he even brought the with him wherever he went. Later on, Erik went to the assistant and said, "I think the pen is broken. Find someone reliable to fix it."

The assistant took the worn-out pen without daring to say a word. While he looked for someone to fix it, he seemed to have realized something. He felt as if someone had tossed a pebble into his heart, sending a series of ripples through it.

Hence, he felt as if he had attained an entirely new piece of knowledge, and he instantly understood why Erik glared at him coldly when he talked about how cheap Summer's gift was.

Erik wasn't mad that the assistant spoke out of turn. Instead, the assistant had accidentally touched on a sensitive topic.

Still, the assistant couldn't understand something. Lots of pretty women came to the company to see Erik, celebrities included. Those celebrities had amazing figures and beautiful looks, and they were also financially capable. The assistant always thought that Erik was a lucky man to excel in both his personality and looks. He was also very charming to have established his business from scratch.

The assistant originally thought that Erik's significant other would be someone outstanding instead of someone like Summer...

Tue

It wasn't that Summer was lacking or anything, but she just wasn't on par with the celebrities. They were celebrities, after all. They were meant to appear in front of the camera, so they had high standards for themselves and took extensive time for skincare.

Summer was so lazy in that aspect that she would sometimes skip the makeup and come to work with black sunglasses. When things were hectic, she would even forgo washing her hair. Why should she wash her hair if she didn't even have time to sleep?

He never imagined in his wildest dreams that Erik would develop such feelings for Summer. After all, would someone accustomed to beautiful women fall for a normal girl like her?

He wasn't doing it for fun, was he?

The assistant had that thought at first, but then, he noticed how Erik never expressed any feelings as Erik had maintained a strictly professional relationship with Summer. Erik

would often take her with him on business trips, and on the surface, there didn't seem to be anything strange between them—save for that pen.

If it weren't for the pen, which Erik was still using after so many years, the assistant was truly unable to figure out those hidden feelings.

Still, he couldn't understand why Erik remained silent on this matter.

With someone of Erik's status, it would be easy to pursue Summer, right?

The assistant couldn't understand how wealthy people's minds worked.

After receiving the approval for her resignation, Summer was elated and felt like the huge mountain that was weighing on her body for the past few years had been removed.

She usually wasn't in the mood for makeup at work, but because she was extremely happy today, she put on some light makeup and even washed her hair before going out to work.

Her position wasn't suited for recruits, so if she were to leave, someone below her would be promoted so that she could transfer her work to them.

Just as expected, when Summer arrived at the company, she saw someone waiting for her at her station.

When the person saw Summer, they put on a surprised expression.

"Summer, did you finally put on makeup?"

Summer was speechless. She never thought that the person would notice her face first, of all things. She ignored the question and asked in slight awkwardness and exasperation, "Are you here for the handover?"

"Yes." The girl's name was Audrey Smith. After hearing Summer's words, she nodded

enthusiastically. "HR wants me to come and take over your work. I'm counting on your guidance from here onward."

"No worries, we're all colleagues here."

No worries, we're all colleagues here?

Summer walked in Audrey, then pulled out a chair and sat on it.

Audrey quickly got some coffee and walked over to her, "Summer, here's some coffee for you."

Summer never thought that someone would bring her coffee. When she looked at Audrey's flattering smile, she instantly understood something.

Audrey

would be taking over Summer's position, so she probably hoped that Summer could help her with all the necessary tips before leaving so that she would run into less trouble in the future.

"Thanks." Summer graciously took the coffee and sipped from the cup.

Seeing that Summer was drinking the coffee she offered, Audrey sighed in relief. She was worried that Summer would treat her badly or cause problems for her simply because the latter would be resigning.

By the looks of it, Summer wasn't too hard to get along with.

"I made this manual some time ago. Summer took out a folder from a drawer and passed it to Audrey. "It's the culmination of my working experience over the past few years. Go through it when you have time. It'll be a great help to your work later."

"Thank you, Summer"

Audrey shifted her legs as she looked at Summer's profile, then asked in a small voice, "Um.... Summer, in your position, do you not deliver coffee to Mr. Ludson?"

Summer shook her head. "Nope. That's beyond our job scope."

Erik had his assistant, and he was exceedingly particular about the things he consumed, so the coffee made by a normal person like her would be beneath him.

When Audrey heard that, she was a little disappointed. She didn't have to deliver coffee to Erik, which meant she would have lesser chances of interacting with him.

"In that case, what about Mr. Ludson's schedule? Don't you have to accompany Mr. Ludson to banquets and stuff?"

Summer was bewildered to hear that. "All those things you mentioned are out of the job scope. What position were you holding before this? Didn't HR tell you about the job scope before you came here?"

She was curious as to how the HR Department handled transfers. Why would Audrey think that this job required delivering coffee to Erik and accompanying him to banquets?

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Bager to Retim

Summer's words made Audrey a little ashamed.

"No I was just wondering what you usually do, so I tried asking..." Audrey poked her index finger, "but not mad, are you, Summer?"

Summer did not overthink as she shook her head. "What's there to be mad about? Look through this I'll let you handle this document."

Since she had to hand over her work, it would be best if Audrey had hands-on experience. The faster she mastered the work, the better, for it would mean that Summer could leave the company

sooner

As soon as she did, she would buy a one-way ticket home. She had not hugged Nicole and Nathan in forever and wondered if the children would feel distanced from her after going so long without meeting her.

Her thoughts were lightyears away,

Since her resignation had only been approved, Summer still had to guide Audrey. When it was time to report their work. Summer took Audrey straight to Erik's office.

Audrey followed behind Summer, tugging at the latter's clothes nervously.

"It's okay, Mr. Ludson may be a little cold and bad-tempered, but he's not too hard to get along with. Summer smiled as she comforted Audrey.

Unexpectedly, the second after she finished talking, the door to the office swung open before a cold voice rang out. "Who did you say was cold and bad-tempered?" The cold and familiar voice caused an instant shift in Audrey's expression.

Summer was speechless. What were the odds? She had just complained about him a little, but he managed to catch it.

Never mind, she always complained about him, anyway. When he went with her to look for Victoria, she even lost control and called him 'the devil'...

He had a foul expression back then, but he did not do anything about it. So, in Summer's eyes, was a good person.

"Why are you here?" He glanced at the person behind her, then looked back at her.

Erik

She said, matter-of-factly, "To report our work. Oh, right." She pulled the person behind her so that Audrey stood in front. "This is Audrey Smith. She'll be taking over my job."

After getting placed in front of Erik for introductions, this was Audrey's first time being in close contact with a tall and handsome

man like him. Her pale face instantly turned suspiciously red as she lowered her head and greeted in a small voice, "M—Mr. Ludson."

Erik glanced at her and nodded. "*Hm.*" After that, he glanced at the nonchalant Summer, his tone -turning considerably colder. "Come in."

"Let's go." Summer took Audrey's hand and followed him into the office.

Subsequently, he sat at his office desk and looked up, his gaze still resting on Summer's face. When he first saw her earlier, he could tell she had put on makeup. It was light, but he could sense it was different from usual. She even put on lip gloss, and the color of her lips was pink and tender, making them look a little like jelly...

"Mr. Ludson? Mr. Ludson?" Summer called him twice before Erik suddenly came to his senses. He noticed that the two were looking curiously at him. It was only then that he realized he was in a daze. That rarely happened in the office, but today...

Erik pursed his lips and collected himself, then said in a cold voice, "What is it?"

"Did you hear what I said?"

He fell silent. Of course, he did not hear anything at all. However, he could not just admit to her that he was distracted. Moreover, someone else was in the office.

Hence, he told Audrey, who was next to Summer, "What's your name again? Smith?"

She hastily answered, "I'm Audrey Smith, sir."

"Oh. I didn't rest well last night, so I'm feeling a little tired right now. Can you make some coffee for me?" He was calm and distant when he ordered.

Summer, who had just sworn to Audrey that they did not have to make coffee, was now speechless. Similarly, Audrey was stunned and exchanged glances with Summer, then after getting a nod from the latter, she hastily went out to make coffee.

After Audrey left, the office quietened down. Summer looked at Erik in exasperation, wanting to comment but deciding against it as she asked, "You didn't sleep well last night, Mr. Ludson?"

However, he did not answer her question. Instead, he asked, "You put on makeup, didn't you?"

Summer was greatly confused; she thought she was hearing things. How could Erik ask the same thing Audrey did just now? Also, she had just put on some light makeup. Why did these people mind her makeup so much? Was it because she was too careless in the past? Was that why everyone noticed straight away when she put on makeup?

She thought having some makeup on would lift her mood, but now, she felt a little awkward about it. She could only smile forcefully in front of Erik and say, "So what if I did?"

Sensing the upset tone in her voice, he seemed to be reprimanding himself for asking that question. As he pursed his lips and asked, "Are you in a good mood because you'll be resigning?" After all, she rarely put on makeup when she went to work in the past.

Summer never thought that he would ask her a question like that. He seemed like he was still bothered about her resignation. *But he already signed and approved it.*

Still, as an employee, she knew she could not say things like she was in a good mood in front of her boss, so she could only say, "No, I just thought since I'm leaving anyway, I should leave a nice impression and a decent face for the company to remember me by. Don't you agree, Mr. Ludson? Also, I'm very saddened to leave the company. I'm not super happy about it."

She would be leaving, anyway, so she did not mind being polite. Hence, she said a lot of nice things about the company.

Unexpectedly, he said, "If you're sad, you should stay. You can talk about your problems so we can discuss ways to solve them."



*"Huh?"* Summer was only being polite earlier. She thought Erik, who was used to the workplace, could understand that they were just pleasantries. However, he played against the rules and talked about helping her solve her problems...

Noticing that she had not said anything, he spoke in a more earnest voice, "Is it something difficult to solve?"

She thought for a bit, then nodded in the end. "Well, I think it is. It's something I have to leave the company to achieve."

Summer was simply too tired from work and wanted some days off and vacation; to be free and relaxed. If she stayed in the company, her days of toil would never end. Also, most importantly, her parents were getting older, so she wanted to go home and spend more time with them.

When she returned, she would find a decent job near her home so she did not have to work so hard every day. She only needed a 9-to-5 job instead of a job that required her to travel all over the world. She did not have to focus on her career anymore and only had to accompany her parents, as simple as that.