

## Departure with a Belly Chapter 3

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When Victoria woke up the following morning, she discovered she had caught a cold. So, she reached into her drawer for some fever medicine and poured a glass of warm water.

The instant she popped the pill into her mouth, a realization dawned on her, causing her eyes to widen and her face to pale. So, she swiftly dashed into the bathroom to spit it out. Then, she leaned over the sink, repeatedly spitting and rinsing her mouth to get every last remnant of the dissolved pill out of her mouth.

“What happens? Why did you rush in here? Are you sick?”

When Alaric’s distinct voice rang out from the doorway, Victoria looked up, startled.

Meanwhile, he had a frown on his face as he stared at her.

Once she caught his gaze, she quickly averted it, and after a moment of silence, she replied, “It’s nothing. I merely took the wrong pill.”

She then wiped away the drops of water on her lips and exited the

bathroom.

However, Alaric watched Victoria walk out with a contemplative look. She's been acting strangely since she returned home yesterday.

After breakfast, the couple left the house together.

Seeing her face ashen, he asked, "Do you want to ride in my car with me?"

After a walk in the rain the day before, Victoria woke up that morning feeling a little under the weather. However, before she could nod, his phone rang.

Hence, Alaric glanced down at it to see that it was a call from Claudia. He wanted to go back inside to answer the phone, but when he raised his

head, he saw that Victoria had already left.

Although married, they did not share the same interests; therefore, she did not routinely listen to his phone calls. That was their way of life for the past two years,

Nevertheless, her swift escape made his heart clench in agony that day.

Soon, the pain faded quickly when he answered the phone call.

Meanwhile, Victoria stood a few feet away and observed Alaric. From the look on his face, she knew who the caller was. His face was so gentle and

soft; it was a side of him she had never seen before.

So, she took a deep breath and suppressed the envy swelling in her. Then, she walked toward the garage while pulling out her phone.

Five minutes later, he hung up the phone and turned to find nobody standing beside him. Then, he quickly glanced in different directions but could not find her.

At that moment, his phone buzzed with a new message. 'I urgently need to get to the office, so I left first.' As Alaric stared at the text message, his face darkened.

Meanwhile, Victoria forced herself to push past her discomfort and head into the office. The moment she sat down at her desk, she was sprawling out over the table.

My head hurts so bad!

Nonetheless, she knew she could not take pain medication, even if she wanted to, because she was pregnant.

Sometimes, she did not know what she was thinking, especially

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considering that her marriage to Alaric was fictitious. Even if she were

pregnant, Griselda would be the only person genuinely happy for her. In addition, Victoria knew that no one else, including him, would be happy about the birth of her child.

She had hoped that by telling him she was pregnant, he would accept the child and strengthen their marriage until yesterday. Nonetheless, when she learned that Claudia had returned, she realized he still felt the same way about Claudia as he had back then. If Alaric knew, his first instinct upon hearing the news would be to advise an abortion, fearing for the future of his marriage to Claudia. Nevertheless, a voice inside her head told her to abort the baby immediately, or she would be left with nothing but shame.

“Miss Victoria,” The sweet voice of a woman calling out from nearby snapped her out of her thoughts. She looked up to see that it was Yasmin Labauve, her assistant.

Then, Victoria sat up straight and plastered on a perfect smile. “Good morning. You’re here.”

On the other hand, Yasmin did not return her smile but looked at her with a concerned expression. “Victoria, you don’t look so good. Are you sick?”

Victoria was startled by the question, but she soon shook her head in response. "I'm fine. I didn't sleep well last night. That's all."

"Really?" Yasmin did not look like she believed her. "You look really pale, though. Are you really okay? You should probably take the day off and see a doctor."

"I'm fine," Victoria replied. "Are you done with yesterday's work?"

However, Yasmin was helpless against the constant redirection back to work. Ultimately, she handed over her pre-sorted documents from her desk and poured Victoria warm water.

"Since you refuse to go to the doctor's, drink this to keep yourself warm."

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Victoria hired Yasmin, and while she was a dedicated employee, the two of them rarely interacted outside of work.

However, she was surprised by Yasmin's concern for her. Then, as she took a few sips of the water, it warmed her heart. She had been feeling cold earlier, but after some warm water, she felt much better.

Still, Yasmin was anxiously staring at her. "Miss Victoria, why don't I hand in

the report today while you rest here?”

“It’s fine,” Victoria said, shaking her head. “I can do it.”

It’s only a mild fever, and I’m not that pampered. If I take time off and delegate my duties whenever I am sick, I will eventually become complacent. What will I do if I get sick in the future without anyone to help me?

Soon, Victoria sorted through her documents and walked toward Alaric’s office.

Her office was located relatively far from his. While it was usually fine, the walk felt tiring that day, likely because she was sick.

Knock! Knock!

“Enter.”

She waited to hear his cold, deep voice before pushing the door open.

As Victoria stepped through the door, she saw another figure inside. It was Claudia, wearing a white dress that highlighted her slender waist. She looked like an angel, her supple hair falling to her waist with the sunlight streaming through the ceiling-to-floor window shining on her.

Meanwhile, Victoria went stiff when she realized who the other person was.

“Oh, Victoria, Claudia greeted. Following that, she walked up to Victoria with a broad grin. Before Victoria could even react, Claudia was embracing her.

Suddenly, Victoria’s body became even more rigid as she locked eyes with Alaric over Claudia’s shoulder.

He was leaning against his desk, staring intently at her with his dark eyes, but it was hard to tell what was happening in his mind.

When Victoria regained her composure, Claudia had already stepped away from her.

I heard all about your situation from Alaric. You’ve had it hard.” There was a look of distress on Claudia’s face. “You must tell me if you need any help.

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Victoria was surprised to hear that. Alaric had told Claudia everything?

However, she soon realized why that had been done. Everyone knew

about her marriage to him, so there was no way they could keep it from Claudia.

Since it could not be a secret, he must explain himself clearly. Moreover, she owed Claudia.

Then, Victoria shoved aside the bitterness she felt and spread her lips in a smile. "Thank you. When did you get back?"

"I flew in yesterday," Claudia replied.

Yesterday? That means Alaric went to see her as soon as she returned.

Inevitably, Claudia is the one he cherishes the most in his life.

"Why do you look so pale?" Claudia suddenly asked. "Are you sick?"

Hearing that, Alaric, languidly leaning against his desk, suddenly turned to stare at Victoria. A frown formed on his brow as he scanned her up and down.

"Is it because you got wet walking home in the rain last night?"

"Walking in the rain?" Claudia looked confused.

Victoria sighed and was about to explain when Alaric coldly snapped,

"Why are you forcing yourself if you don't fool wolle? The company doesn't desperately need you. Go home and rest."

When Claudia heard that, she instinctively turned to glance at him. Why is

he suddenly agitated?