

## Departure with a Belly Chapter 586 - 590

### Chapter 586

What Did Ludson Do to You?

So, Victoria decided to keep mum and let Alaric put Nicole to sleep. Sure enough, Nicol

e wasn't so easy to fool. "Huh? But Mommy was just speaking with me a minute ago. Why did she fall asleep so quickly?

Mommy..." The che

cky little girl even wanted to poke Victoria's cheek to check if she was asleep.

Alaric could vaguely see her movements in the dark as he winced and pulled her into his arms. "Alright, Nicole. You'll wake Mommy like that if she's already asleep."

Nicole, who was now next to Alaric, paused at his words before slowly realizing somethi

ng. "That's right, I shouldn't wake Mommy. She has been walking the entire day and sh

e's probably tired." Victoria had spent the day

walking on her feet, unlike Nicole and Nathan, who had been sitting in the shopping cart

all day long.

"Yes, Mommy is exhausted, so let her rest. You've been a good girl today. So, you shou

ld go to sleep too." Since he had already placed her at his side, he didn't want her to ret

urn to Victoria's side lest she disturbed Victoria's sleep. Hence, Nicole placed his arms

around her and freed up his arm as a pillow for her to rest on. "You're sleeping next to

me tonight.”

As Nicole had never slept next to him before, she blinked a couple of times at him and a

sked innocently, “Is your arm soft, Daddy?”

Alaric’s figure was lean, and his arms weren’t exactly fat, so they weren’t soft at all. It do

esn’t seem like a good idea to use my arm as her

pillow, he thought. So, he said after a few seconds of hesitation, “Then...

Should! get yo

u a pillow?”

“I want to sleep by Mommy’s side.” She sulked.

“But she’s already asleep and you’ll wake her up if you go over now.”

This time it was Nicole’s turn to slip into a dilemma, undecided on whether she should sl

eeep on Alaric’s hard arm or wake up Victoria. In the end, she lay on Alaric’s arm, and th

e second her

head rested on it, her face wrinkled into a scowl. “Daddy, I think I’ll share a pillow with y

ou instead.”

“Okay.” Alaric shared half of his pillow with

her, but alas, an adult’s pillow was not suitable for a child, so

he got out of bed, found a clean towel, and placed it over his arm for her.

Nicole felt her skin rubbing against the towel as she thought, Although it’s not as soft as

Mommy’s arms, it’s way better than Daddy’s tough arms and doesn’t feel that bad. Soon

, she fell asleep, utterly content.

Apparently, it was true that children could fall asleep at will. Just a second ago, Nicole w

as still nattering on, but now she was already asleep in a blink of an eye.

When Alaric h

heard that her breathing had

gradually become even and long, he relaxed. Finally, this heartless kid is

asleep, he tho

ught helplessly, tucking her under the

blanket.

After all that was done, something came into his mind, and he turned to

Victoria's directi

on while pursing his lips together. It looks like it will be a sleepless night for me.

Victoria hadn't fallen asleep, and she had merely kept her eyes closed in avoidance. So,

she was

fully aware of the conversation between Alaric and Nicole. She kept her silence for a lon

g time before sighing inwardly. Both of them were no fools and

knew that they were far from asleep. After all, nobody would fall asleep so suddenly

within mere seconds, especially after Nicole's bombshell.

One didn't answer and the other didn't expose it; they were just giving each other an out

. The sounds of children's long, steady breathing echoed in the room while the adults w

ere both immersed in their own thoughts.

Victoria stared at the ceiling and thought about all sorts of things in her cluttered mind. I

n the end, she had no idea when she actually fell asleep. It was as though she was sud

denly hit by a sleeping spell and slipped into slumber just like that. The next morning, w

hen she woke up, she saw that she was the only one left in bed. She looked around daz

edly and only went downstairs after a few seconds.

It was already New Year's Day, and almost everyone was busy in the hall and greeted h

er upon seeing that she had woken up. Eventually, she finally found a familiar face after

walking around the house and approached her. "Sasha, where are the others?"

A smile appeared on Sasha's face at the sight of her. "Oh, you're awake,

Victoria. Every

one else is out on errands."

Everyone is out? Victoria repeated

in her head. I just slept in a little and everyone was gone when I woke up.

Nonetheless,

she simply nodded, turned on her heels, and was just about to leave when she recalled

something and stopped abruptly. "Sasha, I remember that you have a son.

Will he be ba

ck for the holidays?"

At the mention of this, the smile on Sasha's face turned stiff. A few seconds later, she s

aid in dismay, "He's not going to be back because he's

spending New Year's Day with his friends in another town, Esti, and will have lots of fun there."

Although Victoria had lost her memories, she had learned through conversations that S

asha had a son who had just graduated recently. Normally, youngsters didn't like to spe

nd the holidays at home and would prefer to hang out with their friends when they were

free. She could understand this and nodded to show her understanding before leaving the room.

Meanwhile, Sasha remained rooted on the spot as she sighed softly.

As Victoria couldn't find anyone and didn't have to do anything in the house, she was bo

red out of her wits. In

the end, she decided to return to her room to catch a little more

sleep. Alas, something popped up in her mind after she climbed into bed, and she gave Summer a video call.

On the other end, Summer picked up her call almost immediately and was very excited t

o receive Victoria's call. She even roasted Victoria, claiming that Victoria had left her at t

he back of her mind after she went abroad and thought that

Victoria would only call her after the holidays.

"Of course not. I'll definitely call you during the New Year's. Even if I don't call you now, I'm pretty sure I'll call you tonight."

"So, you mean that you're not calling me tonight after this call?"

"No, I'll call you in the evening, too."

A contented smile spread across Summer's face after she heard Victoria's reassurance

s. Unfortunately, right afterward, her expression turned a little odd. "There's something I

would like to tell you."

"Yeah?"

"My boss, that Ludson guy..." Summer drifted off, her ears burning brightly as she bit he

r lower lip.

Victoria stared at her with a look of confusion. "Yeah? What did he do to you?"

"Well, the company is closed for the annual holidays, and I assumed that this workaholic

would continue working like the previous years. Who would have guessed that he... he

also took the annual leave?"

Still, Victoria couldn't get the point of Summer telling her this. "Isn't that normal? Maybe

he decided to finally take a break, or maybe there's nothing special he has to work on th

is year. Why are your ears red?"

"Ah!" The second Victoria pointed out that her ears were crimson, she shrieked like a ca

t that had its tail stomped on "Red? My ears? No, it's not. You're just seeing things. That

's right!"

If Victoria were merely suspicious earlier, she was now certain that there was something amiss with Summer.

## Chapter 587

My Heart Belongs to Someone

“Something’s up between you two?” Victoria asked sharply and hit the bull’s eye with her observation.

Immediately, Summer’s face turned as red as her ears. “Victoria!”

At the sight

of Summer’s angry expression, Victoria knew that she was right on the money and laugh

ed. “Seems like I’m right. What? Did he visit your home during his leave?”

Summer fell silent.

While looking at the change in

Summer’s expression, Victoria continued mercilessly, “Not only did he go to your home,

but he also brought gifts?”

Summer’s eyes widened in disbelief.

Then, Victoria jokingly asked, “Don’t tell me that he proposed too.”

That was when the look in Summer’s eyes changed, and it made Victoria silent as well

as they both stared at each other on the phone.

After some time, Victoria found her voice. “So, was my last joke actually accurate?”

“Y–

You...” Summer pondered for a long time about how she was going to tell this to Victori

a and didn’t

expect it to be out in the open as a joke. After a long time, she said dejectedly,

“You got

it all right.”

Victoria was speechless and only questioned after moments of silence, “So, now what?

What is it between you two?”

“I don’t know.” Summer sighed. “My dad likes him a lot.”

Victoria wasn’t surprised since all parents want their children to find a suitable partner. If

a man like Erik who

started off with nothing could bring the company to where it stood today, it meant that h

e was capable and

had a strong heart.

However, she soon noticed that Summer only mentioned her father and not her mother.

“What about your mom?”

“My mom? She doesn’t like him. At first, she was happy that a man came, but not anym

ore when she realized who he was.” Summer sighed lightly. “She thinks that people like

Erik are out of our league since we are ordinary people. Our family backgrounds aren’t

on the same level. So, we’ll not be happy if we are together.”

Since ancient

times, many marriages required having equal backgrounds. Even though some didn’t m

atch, they usually didn’t usually have a happy ending. Of course, there are couples with

well-matched backgrounds, but happy endings still weren’t common.

In the end, marriage was complicated and not something that could be explained easily



in a few words.

After some

thought, Victoria asked, "Don't care about what other people think. Most

importantly, wh

at do you think?"

It was obvious that Summer didn't expect the conversation to go this way as

she was st

unned and didn't react for a good few minutes.

"What's wrong?" Victoria inquired.

Summer shook her head. "Nothing."

Then, she pursed her lips and said softly, "I don't really know what to think

about it. I'm s

till in a daze."

Victoria couldn't help but laugh at her expression. "Why is that?"

Summer was a little worked up as she babbled, "I've

always seen him as my boss all these years. How did it end

up

like this? Why is he doing this? When we were working, I don't think he

treated me any

differently, though. He's only asked me to work and go on business trips like a slave."

Victoria was utterly speechless at this point.

"For a person like him to propose at my house, what do you think he's

scheming?" Sum

mer got even more agitated as her imagination started to run free. "Victoria,

do you thin

k it's because my resignation caught him off guard and he is trying to use

marriage to tie

me down? Does he think that I will work for him for free if I marry him?"

The sudden twist to

Summer's logic stunned Victoria as she couldn't find the words to refute Summer's argument.

"Victoria, if I'm his employee, he needs to pay my salary and bonuses every year. However, if I become his wife, I'll have to work for free and he won't need to pay me."

Then, Victoria asked about Summer's salary and bonus. She discovered that Summer e

arned around 150 thousand before informing her, "People will be envious of you the mo

ment they know just how much you earn per month. Maybe your blind dates aren't as ric

h as you, but... I

think for someone who started with nothing and now owns the Ludson Corporation, he p

robably considers 150 thousand as a small change."

The Ludson Corporation was a listed company, so its annual profit could shoot up

to astronomical numbers. Even though Victoria didn't have the actual numbers, if one th

ought about it, Summer's salary would only be considered a small amount in Erik's eyes.

"Yes. He's loaded. Still, businessmen only talk about gains and won't do anything witho

ut profit. Don't you think he proposed to me because of that?"

Victoria was momentarily dumbstruck

before saying, "So, you're saying he only wanted to marry you to save on that little cost?"

"What else could it be? Why would he marry me, then?"

“You probably don’t quite understand. For someone of his status, he can easily settle down with a girl from a suitable family. Then, the companies of both families can work together. Do you know just how much profit he could earn by then?” Summer knew that as well. After all, she had worked in the company for many years. So, she could easily estimate the millions of profits a marriage like that could bring Erik after Victoria’s analysis.

“So, do you still think he’s doing this because he refuses to pay your salary?” Summer pursed her lips and remained silent. After a while, she questioned hesitantly, “If he’s not doing this to not pay me, what else can it be for?”

Victoria quirked a brow at her. “You’re a smart girl. Do you really need to ask?”

Summer’s face flushed crimson at that. “Y–You are a teaser!”

Victoria laughed. “Am I one? Aren’t I telling the truth? You told me several times before that many celebrities and beautiful women always seek him out, but he wouldn’t entertain them. Remember that?”

In the past, Summer used to ramble on topics like that since she liked to gossip about Erik’s love life.

Regardless, she found it hard to speak now that this had something to do with her. “I–Is that so? I don’t really remember.”

“That is to say, maybe it wasn’t that he didn’t want to entertain them. It could be that he already had someone

in his heart.”

“What the hell? Someone in his heart? What are you talking about? Argh!”

Summer was

shocked by that last sentence and hung up the phone before Victoria could react. Then

, she threw the phone to the side and cupped her hot cheeks as she breathed heavily.

## Chapter 588

### A Blind Date

Summer felt as though she was wading through a thick fog before Victoria's call.

She kept wondering why Erik suddenly proposed to her and was so sure that he wanted

her to work for free

like a slave.

That has to be it. It doesn't make sense for him to propose. This is too unusual as we ar

e from different worlds.

So, after a process of elimination, Summer felt that Erik just wanted her to work for free.

She didn't dare to think of that possibility Victoria was hinting at. Does Erik like me? I m

ust be crazy to even think that.

Goosebumps covered Summer's body the more she thought about it.

Impossible. Then,

she pulled the covers over her head and refused to think about it.

However, a knock could be heard at her door.

"Who is it?" Summer jerked up like a frightened bird after the call with Victoria.

"Me." It was Jane's muffled voice behind the door.

Then, Summer let out a breath of relief before getting up to open the door.

"Mom, what's

wrong?"

Jane glanced at her before walking in. "What are you doing in your room?"

"Nothing."

"Is that so? I thought I heard you talking."

Before Summer could wonder if Jane had overheard her conversation with Victoria, Jane asked, "Was it your boss calling you?" Summer felt relieved at her question as it seemed Jane didn't overhear anything. "No, Mom. What are you thinking about? It was Victoria." "Victoria?" Jane brightened up at the mention of Victoria. "It's been a long time since I've seen her. Is she coming to our home this year too?" "Nope." Summer shook her head. "She's abroad now. I don't know when she's returning."

Jane sighed at that. "I miss that girl. She used to come to our place frequently and I'd prepare gifts for you and her for New Year's. It's a pity that..." Jane trailed off before continuing, "Summer, you see how Victoria's family was such a good match with the Cadogans. However, after the Selwyns' bankruptcy, it didn't end well for her and that man. It'll be the same for you and your boss. There's just a huge class difference between our families."

Summer, knew what Jane wanted to talk about the moment she mentioned Victoria's marriage. She pursed her red lips and stayed silent.

"He's handsome. One in a million even. Your children will inherit his good genes."

-Summer blushed at that. "Mom, what are you talking about?"

“Aren’t I right? He’s a good person. He’s smart since he knows how to make money. Thi

s type of guy is hard to come by.”

Even though Jane was praising Erik, Summer couldn’t find the words to answer

her as she knew Jane too well. Jane was just foreshadowing the actual topic she wanted to talk about. So, Summer quietly waited for her next words.

As expected, Jane felt that she had beaten around the bush enough and went straight into it. “But... If you think about it, a good man like him will always hav

e women around him. As your mother, you are the best girl in the world in my eyes. You

are worthy of any good man in this world, but good men don’t lack their fair share of girl

s pursuing them too. I don’t want to see you chasing after a man later and forgetting you

rself in the process.”

Those last words made Summer look up as it shattered her view of her mother.

She thought Jane would say that their families weren’t well–

matched and that she wasn’t worthy enough for Erik, or that he would get tired of her. T

hen, what would she be left with?

“Mom...”

“Summer, even though I want you to get married early, you still need to choose your par

tner wisely.” Jane couldn’t help but caress Summer’s head and asked in a soft voice, “D

o you understand?”

“I know.” Summer nodded. “Don’t worry, Mom. I won’t get jealous and chase after a ma

n. That would be too low of me.”

Jane finally let out a breath of relief at her words. “That’s good.”

At first, Jane was worried that Summer had been seduced by Erik since girls would flock

to an excellent guy like him even if he just looked in their direction.

She was worried sick that Summer would also fall under his spell as his family backgrou

nd was powerful. Once she was certain about Summer’s stance on this, Jane smiled pr

oudly and said, “Then, I’ll arrange for a blind date for you.”

“Blind date?” Summer unconsciously frowned at those two words. “Why do I have to go on a blind date?”

“Silly girl. Look at you. What are you going to do if you don’t go on blind dates? Besides,

it’ll be faster since I’m getting recommendations from a trusted source. We’ll know ever

ything about that guy. If he’s a good match, we can talk about marriage immediately.”

Summer felt like fainting. “Even if it was someone you recommended, I can’t just jump in

and talk about marriage like that. We’ll need time to get to know each other.”

“I know. You’ll get time to get along. Let’s just set a date. What about tomorrow or the day after?”



Summer questioned, "It's New Year's tomorrow. Won't he need to celebrate it as well?"

"That's exactly it. Everyone will be at home to help take a look at him. That's decided, then. I'll ask him to come over tomorrow." Then, Jane walked out of the room before Summer could reply.

Summer stood rooted on the spot as she had been rendered utterly speechless by Jane

's actions. Nonetheless, when her mind wandered to Erik, she was quick to shake her head to get rid of those thoughts.

I should stop thinking about it. He and I. It's not going to happen. If he comes looking for me again, I'll tell him.

So, Summer made up her mind just like that. Yet, her heart suddenly felt empty.

"What's wrong?" Summer rubbed her chest as she frowned. "Don't tell me I've fallen for the devil who only knows to torment me with work? Get yourself together, Summer! Stop thinking about it. Nothing will happen between us!"

Soon, she banished those thoughts from her mind. It was due to that reason that she merely replied to him once at night during dinner when he sent her a message wishing her a 'Happy New Year'.

The following morning, Summer felt her phone vibrating during her sleep. She took a look

and saw that Erik was calling her and her years of working habit made her  
pick it up  
unconsciously.

## Chapter 589

Have You Forgotten That You Have Resigned

“Hi, Mr. Ludson.” Summer’s familiar tone caught Erik off guard.

He asked, “Are you up?”

She rolled out of bed in response, as if she was

preparing herself to receive a work call while abroad. She grabbed her glasses and inquired,

“Is there an issue with work?” As soon as she asked the question, there was an eerie

silence on the other end.

“Mr. Ludson?” she called out.

He let out a sigh and asked, “Have you forgotten that you have already resigned?”

There was a brief pause as she processed his words. “Oh, right, I have already resigned.”

It finally dawned on her that this phone call was not work-

related. Instantly, exhaustion overpowered her mental state and she didn’t want to continue

the conversation. She simply said, “I’m going back to sleep. I’m so tired.”

She hung

up the phone without hesitation.

On the other end, Erik listened to the busy tone lingering on the line for a while before realizing

what had happened. He hadn’t even informed her about his plan to visit her today.

Nevertheless, he didn’t expect her to react this way when she wasn’t working, displaying

a completely different demeanor from her obedient self at the company. A smile formed

ed on the corners of his lips as he rose from his seat to tidy up his belongings. Shortly after she ended the call and settled back into bed, there was a knock at her door

. She opened her eyes with a perplexed expression and couldn't help but feel a bit speechless.

Why was there such a racket early in the morning on New Year's Day?

They all

stayed up late celebrating the arrival of the New Year yesterday. Shouldn't everyone be

resting at this time?

Even though she felt rather annoyed and resigned from being disturbed, she obediently

got out of bed since she was at

home. As she made her way toward the door, the idea of buying a small house after New

Year's Day crossed her mind. That way, she could sleep for as long as she wanted. As

she opened the door, she found Jane standing there with a smile,

accompanied by her

aunt.

Her aunt's face immediately lit up with warmth upon seeing her and she showered Summer

with praise, saying, "Oh, Summer, it's been so many years since I last saw you, and

you've grown even more beautiful, with an even better temperament than before."

Summer, dressed in bear-print pajamas and just

having woken up, couldn't help but feel speechless at her aunt's remarks. She glanced

down at her attire and ran her fingers through her disheveled hair before forcing a smile and responding. "Thank you for the compliment. It has been many years, and you look even younger than before."

It was all small talk, and she could handle it with ease. Clearly, her small talk was effective as her aunt genuinely believed her since the woman warmly took her hand and initiated a conversation...

Summer was still incredibly sleepy, but her aunt persisted in talking, even dragging her downstairs. However, she didn't resist and simply ran her fingers through her disheveled hair once again. She grew up with her aunt's children, and they had witnessed each other in all sorts of embarrassing situations, so she didn't bother dressing up and merely followed her aunt downstairs.

To her surprise, there was another unfamiliar man waiting there. When she caught sight of the stranger, her expression briefly changed, and she turned to her aunt. Her aunt warmly introduced, "Come on, Summer, let me introduce you. This is Zach. Zach, meet Summer. Get to know each other."

It finally dawned on her—her aunt's enthusiastic urge to bring her downstairs was to set her up with another man.

She lowered her head and asked, feigning a smile, "Aunt Jenny, why didn't you tell me t

here would be a man? I could have changed clothes and put on some makeup, right?"

Jenny maintained her smile, and in a slightly elevated tone, she responded without hesit

ation in front of the man, "It's

alright. You won't be wearing makeup every day if you get married in the future, right? B

esides, you look beautiful whether or not you wear makeup."

When Zach caught sight of Summer, his eyes immediately lit up. So, when Jenny introduced them, he eagerly approached her.

"Hello, I'm Zach."

He smirked and said, "I hope you don't mind. I told your aunt that I wanted to see you wi

thout makeup, so she

came up with this idea. You look natural and beautiful."

He even winked at her after making that comment, as if he believed he was being char

ming. "I've seen plenty of girls

who are stunning, but they look completely different without makeup. Those girls are jus

t too fake. I think you're genuine."

Summer wanted to convey to Zach that it would be better if he didn't verbalize every tho

ught that crossed his mind. After all, being praised by a man like him didn't bring her ha

ppiness. Regardless, she forced a faint smile and responded, "Thank you."

"You're welcome."

To her dismay, Jenny believed that they had an instant connection after observing their interaction. She sat down with Jane enthusiastically and bombarded them with various questions. As Summer settled on the couch, Zach took a seat beside her. The close proximity made her furrow her brow in discomfort. What was this man's deal? It was their first meeting, yet he was already trying his luck. She attempted to stand up, but Jenny gently pushed her back down. "Sit down and have a conversation. It's the best way to get to know each other. Zach, why don't you tell Summer about your work?" "Sure."

He then began animatedly discussing his work. Although Jenny's intention for them to get to know each other was pure, he launched into a relentless self-promotion spiel, bragging about himself without missing a beat. Due to their proximity, Summer occasionally caught a whiff of his faint, unpleasant breath as he spoke. She glanced at his profile, taking note of his constant babbling. Was she expected to embark on a lifelong journey with a man like him after a blind date? Just the mere thought of that possibility made her realize that remaining single was a far better option than being with someone like him. The idea of being with such a person was unimaginable to her.

With that in mind, she turned her face away and lowered her eyelids. She would undoubtedly feel unhappy if she had to confront such situations regularly while living at home. It became apparent to her that finding a reliable partner on her own was the right decision. After the new year, she resolved to inquire with Tissia about the individual Tissia had mentioned previously, the one she intended to introduce to Summer. While she was lost in her contemplation, the doorbell rang. Jane rose to her feet and remarked, "It's probably your sister and the rest of the gang coming over." Summer instantly felt a sense of despair. This was how blind dates played out in the countryside—relatives would swarm in, evaluating the potential match as if it were a momentous affair. At this rate, she could barely keep a lid on her annoyance as she felt that it would be better to retreat upstairs and get some sleep, rather than waste any more time here. As she weighed her options, she heard her mother's surprised voice, "Mr. Ludson? What brings you here?" "Jane, just call me Erik." A man, whose voice was cold and formal, could be heard from the doorway. This caused Summer, who had been on the verge of sneaking upstairs to sleep, to freeze in her tracks.



## Chapter 590

Would You Like a Taste?

Why is Erik here? Summer's eyes had been showing signs of impatience initially, but sh

e stiffened when she realized the person outside the door was that man. I'm still

in my teddy bear pajamas and haven't washed my face. After a night of sleep, my face i

s undoubtedly oily. Shoot! Do I have eye boogers? At

this thought, she reached up and touched the corner of her eyes. Phew!

Thankfully, ther

e aren't any.

Nonetheless, she felt uneasy about doing nothing and wondered if she should hurry ups

tairs, clean up, and get dressed before he entered the room. However, as she got to her

feet, Jane returned to the room with Erik.

"Your boss is here, Summer."

"Hello, everyone." The man's cold voice echoed throughout the room.

Everyone, including Zach, who had been invited over for matchmaking, stared at Erik wi

th disbelief in their eyes from the moment he stepped into the room. After all, Erik was a

handsome man who exuded such a powerful aura that his mere existence caused an in

visible sense of intimidation to fill the entire living room.

Who would be able to ignore such a man?

When Summer's eyes met

Erik's, she instinctively twirled her hair in embarrassment. Why is he here?  
Why doesn't

he notify me before he arrives? With these thoughts racing in her mind, she  
pursed her

lips helplessly and returned to her seat.

Then, he took the seat across from her. He had no choice since it was the  
only unoccupied seat in the room.

On the other hand, she felt awkward realizing he was sitting directly across  
from her and

she wanted to bury her face in her knees. If I had known he was coming, I  
would

have changed and cleaned up instead of showing up as I am now...

"You are Summer's employer?" While Summer was deep in thought, Zach,  
sitting beside

her, broke the silence and began talking to Erik.

After hearing this, she glanced at Zach in surprise. Is this man trying to cozy  
up to Erik?

While she was mid-contemplation, he said, "Hello, my name is Zach. I work  
at..."

He rattled off a long and complicated company name that she didn't pay  
attention to or

understand, but all she

heard was a cold grunt of acknowledgment.

At this moment, Summer couldn't resist the urge to look up at Erik, and they  
unexpectedly

locked gazes. She

noticed a questioning look

in his eyes as if he was wondering about her relationship with the man sitting  
next

to her.

Suddenly, Zach piped up, “Oh, right. I haven’t even told you who I am. I’m here for my date with Summer...”

She had not reacted to a single word he had said until now, but his words finally caused

her to lift her head, revealing her fair face to those around her. Then, she stared at him in

disbelief. Today is our first meeting. How can it be a date? He made it appear as though

we were already dating.

“A date?” As he said this, Erik turned to stare directly into Summer’s face with a gaze as

intense as a spotlight. When he saw that something was

off about her eye and expression, he quickly realized what was going on.

Hence, he asked,

“You just met today?”

11:31 Mon, 24 Jul GOD

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Summer nodded, somewhat embarrassed. “Yes. We only met today, but I have fallen in

love with her at first sight. I think she’s an amazing and beautiful woman, so I’ve decided to date her.”

Summer stared at him in utter disbelief. Ha! Is that something he can decide for himself?

So, he “decided,” and now I have to date him? How impressive he thinks he is!

Unfortunately,

she couldn’t voice this sentiment aloud because their elders were also present. If not for them and the group of relatives in the room, she might have undoubtedly

scoffed and rolled her eyes before admonishing him.

You've decided?" Erik's gaze finally shifted from Summer's face to look at Zach. "You decided on your own?" Each of his words had a seductive, alluring quality because of how slowly he had said them. Stunned, Zach stared at him for a moment before nodding. "Yes."

When Jane heard that, her face clearly twisted with displeasure. She had anticipated a good, trustworthy man, but she hadn't bargained for someone with his mindset to be introduced as her daughter's potential match. He just decided on his own. Does he believe himself to be an emperor from bygone dynasties? Is he under the impression that the girl he has feelings for must become his wife?

Suddenly, a strange tension pervaded the room as Summer's relatives were also rendered speechless by Zach's declaration.

Then, the youngest boy among them immediately turned to Zach and said, "Hey, sir, if you like my sister, you should be sincere when you ask her out on a date. You should also have asked her what she wanted. We have not even started the first step of courtship, yet you've just decided to date her. Have you ever asked her if she likes you?"

The boy was her cousin on the paternal side of the family, and because the older members of his family were absent, no one reprimanded him for what he had just said.

His words seemed to have flipped a switch among the younger family members, as someone else chimed in, "Don't you think your declaration was disrespectful to her? Aunt Jenny, just where did you find this guy? He doesn't look like he'll be a good match."

On the other hand, Zach had not expected a simple statement from him would lead to attacks on his character. Furious, he shot to his feet and barked, "Is this how the Jones Family treats their guests?" Then, he turned to look down at Summer and stated, "I only like you because I saw that you're pretty without makeup, Summer. I would never have liked you otherwise. Still, your relatives are a little too much. Don't you think so?"

After hearing this, she just stared at him in disbelief.

"Hey! What do you mean by saying you only like her because she's pretty without makeup? Who do you think you are? You have pretty dreams for someone as ugly as you are. Do you think your looks are good enough for her?"

"You have gone too far! There is no way she could easily find a man to marry at her age anyway. If I had not overlooked her age, no man would be visiting."

The entire ruckus made Summer's head pound. She glared at Zach, drew

a deep breath, and then let loose with the rage building up inside her since she had been

rudely woken up earlier that morning. "Are you done yet? If yes, get out!"

Her explosive

shout made everyone's faces go pale.

Zach had no idea she could react in such a manner, and

he fumbled for words as he pointed at her in shock. "You harpy!"

"Ha!" Summer grabbed the glass of water on the table and aimed it at him. "I can be worse.

Would you like a

taste of it?"

Fearing she might splash the water at him, he sprinted out of the house,

cursing at her loudly.

Meanwhile, Jenny watched the entire scene play out in awkward silence.

Everything wasn't

going so well just a few minutes ago, so how did things end up like this?

Just... How could

that man's character switch at the drop

of a hat?

"Jenny, what kind of date did you set up for Summer? Can you find a better

man next time?"

one of the relatives

asked.

"Yeah! While Summer is getting on in years, she certainly doesn't act her age.

If there are

no eligible men her

age or older/we can consider younger men."

Summer, unable to stand being in the room for another second, promptly

retreated to

her room.