

Departure with a Belly Chapter 401

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Chapter 401

Since then, Bane stopped arguing with her because he would still speak in the gentlest tone he could, no matter what she said. He was undoubtedly doing something hurtful, yet he behaved as though it was for her good.

No matter how furious Victoria was or whatever hurtful words she spoke, he would remain unfazed. That made her feel like there was no point arguing with him, so she brought her children away.

Once they returned to their room, she stood beside the window and waited about five minutes before seeing him leave in a car. He was not the only one who departed because she noticed he had brought half of the guards surrounding the villa with him.

That realization surprised her as she wondered if Ethan knew about this.

However, she was also confused because Bane meant to confine her to this villa, so why did he whisk away so many people? Could someone have found out where she was? If that were the case, should Bane not bring her to another location instead?

Knock. Knock.

Victoria's thoughts were soon interrupted by the knocks on the door. She

quickly opened up and saw Ethan standing outside. "Miss Selwyn."

"You-"

She had only spoken one word before he cut her off. "Miss Selwyn, please bring Nathan and Nicole and follow me."

A few minutes later, the two quickly left, each holding a child. It was a smooth way out with no one blocking their way, but Victoria's heart was pounding as though they were escaping for their lives.

Ethan then led her to a car.

After she and the two children got in, he entered and put on his seatbelt before turning to instruct them, "Miss Selwyn, please lay down below the seat with the kids."

That suggestion shocked her out of her wits. "Will lying down stop them from discovering us?"

With a solemn expression, he pursed his lips. "Yes, but only if they don't check the car."

Hearing that, Victoria understood what he meant. If the guards did not open their doors, they would depart undetected, but if the opposite happened...

"We only have one chance, so why don't we give it a try? Even if we fail, I'm sure Mr. Morison wouldn't harm you in any way."

"But..." She bit her lips while looking at Ethan with a conflicted expression.

Although Bane would not harm her if their plan failed, what about Ethan? He was beaten up the last time, and he thanked her probably because her insistence on seeing him made Bane excuse him out of confinement.

What would happen to Ethan if she escaped?

“Miss Selwyn, we don’t have much time, so please make your decision as quickly as possible.”

After Ethan finished, he seemed to have guessed what she was hesitant about and added, “Miss Selwyn, I’m doing this because I’ve decided to do so. Don’t worry about what might happen because I’ll atone for my actions. You should be thinking about yourself now.”

Thinking about myself... If she had to think about herself, she would choose to bring her children and escape. If she continued to be confined here, her

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company would have no one to supervise, and her children might get expelled for missing classes. The longer she gave in, the longer they could not enjoy an ordinary life.

“Miss Selwyn, we’re running out of time.”

Victoria bit her lip and forced herself to make a decision. “Thank you. I’ll repay your kindness when I can.” After she spoke, she led the children to lie

under the seat.

The kids were obedient and did not interrupt the grownups while they conversed. At that moment, they were quietly lying on the ground, disregarding whether it was dirty.

When she got down, she felt an icy sensation and noticed the child beside her hissing from the cold, so she comforted her. "Don't worry. It's only until we get out."

Nicole nodded gently, indicating that she understood.

Seeing everyone in position, Ethan knew Victoria had made her decision, so he declared, "Miss Selwyn, brace yourselves."

The car began moving.

While driving, he focused on the road and explained, "We'll arrive at the gate in about two minutes. About half of the men have been brought away, but there are still quite a few. I might not be able to go head-on with them. If we're lucky, they will let me leave, and I'll send you guys somewhere before returning. If we're not, I'll drive away. It might get reckless, so you have to fasten your seatbelts and protect yourselves."

Victoria digested every word he said and uttered, "Thank you."

Ethan tugged his lips into a faint smile and said nothing.

Two minutes later, the car arrived at the entrance. Unlike how smoothly

Bane's car left the place, the security guards blocked his. Once the vehicle came to a stop, Victoria felt her breath hitch, and she hinted at the children with her eyes, to which they responded by cooperatively lying there, unmoving.

Someone knocked on the window, and Ethan rolled it down halfway and looked at the person outside with an emotionless face.

When the guy outside saw it was him, his expression turned slightly sullen.

"Mr. Hudson, are you heading out?"

"Yes." Ethan nodded before coldly explaining, "Mr. Morison left something here. I need to send it to him."

The guard seemed somewhat hesitant. "But... Mr. Morison told us you must stay here and protect Miss Selwyn."

"Protect Miss Selwyn? Yes, I do need to protect her, but I need to bring this to Mr. Morison too. Or perhaps, you'd like to run the errand for me?"

"But-"

"Let me through."

Since they were at a standstill, the other guards ran over to check on the situation. The turn of events made Ethan frown because it would be more difficult to execute their plans if more people gathered.

Seeing the increasing personnel, he looked at the wide-open gate, hesitating

whether he should just make a run for it. If he did, though, he would immediately come off as guilty.

Once they began chasing him, the risk of getting into a car accident would increase if he drove too recklessly. If possible, he would rather they get out of here safely. Therefore, he immediately took out the keys from the ignition when he saw the others gathering here. "Why don't you send this to Mr. Morison? If he asks about it, you can tell him you stopped me from leaving and delayed this matter."

The others were taken aback when they saw Ethan calling it quits. After all, Bane was not someone they could offend. Since he was someone Bane trusted, the guard felt worried and said, "Okay, okay. You may leave."

Ethan questioned, "Are you sure you don't want to make the trip?"

"How can I do that, Mr. Hudson? Mr. Morison specifically asked for you, so how could I take over? Moreover, we have no idea where Mr. Morison went."

Then, Ethan snorted coldly before restarting the engine and driving away.

Once he was gone, the leading guard scratched his head, muttering, "That's strange. Why would Mr. Morison ask him to send something at this hour? Wait.

Did you check his car?"

"No, I didn't... Are we supposed to?"

Once that reply came out, it received a reprimand. "Have you forgotten the

incident where Mr. Morison punished Mr. Hudson a few days ago? How could you not check his car before letting him out? Are you looking to be punished too?"

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*"But Mr. Hudson seemed angry, and I was afraid to offend him, so- While the leader listened to that explanation, he suddenly paled and ordered, "Sh*t! Go after him, and find someone to check if Miss Selwyn is in her room." With that, everyone went to carry out their orders. Some went to get a car while others went to check.*

"Oh, no. Miss Selwyn is not in her room!"

"Geez, Mr. Hudson. Send more cars to chase after him and tell Mr. Morison about this."

Instantly, the entire residential area fell into chaos.

After escaping, Ethan drove the car at top speed. Meanwhile, Victoria and the children had sat up. Considering they might face dangerous situations later, they all fastened their seatbelts.

He dared not slow down and looked at the rearview mirror, checking the

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situation while speaking to her, "They'll be alerted soon. Worst-case scenario -they're catching up right now. If they do, I'll send you somewhere you can hide. The car will be an obvious target."

Nodding, Victoria affirmed, "Okay."

“After that, I might not be able to see you soon, so you have to think of something after getting out.” Once he finished speaking, he gave her a serious look through the rearview mirror. “Miss Selwyn, we’re not home, so are you sure about this? You’re alone with two children, so staying outside the villa might be highly dangerous. We can still return if you regret this.”

“No, I’m not going back. I don’t regret my decision.” She bit her lip. “It’s not like I haven’t lived abroad with my children before, so don’t worry. You can just find somewhere to drop us off.”

When he heard her determined tone and reluctance to stay, he nodded and said, “Okay. I understand.”

Intending to hide from traffic cameras, Ethan took several twists and turns.

After who knew how long, he had lost track of where he was and finally found a secluded place to drop Victoria and the children off.

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Once the car stopped, he looked into the distance. “There’s a farm in front. You can hide there.”

Then, the trio got out of the car, but before they left. Ethan remembered something and took out all the cash from his wallet before giving it to her. “I don’t have much cash on me during this trip. This is all I have, and I can’t give you my phone because they might track it.”

Looking at the wad of cash, Victoria refused to take it. “Mr. Hudson...” Her voice choked up. “I’m sorry that this is gonna cause you trouble.”

When he heard that, he showed her a bright smile. “Miss Selwyn, I’ve watched.

Nicole and Nathan grow up these five years. They're adorable, and you're a great person. I..." He could not continue the rest but stuffed the cash into her hand. "You should hurry up and leave. The longer you stay in one place, the larger the risk of exposing your location."

Once he finished, he returned to the car, looking like he did not intend to say anything more.

Victoria bit her lip. She had already left with him, so saying anything else now would only make her hypocritical. Therefore, she gave him a deep look and thanked him before quickly leaving with her children.

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ad Love Piss No Cutcome

Ethan sat in his original spot, watching as the three figures left. He waited until they hid inside the farm before leaving.

Since no one was in the car with him, he drove slowly. That was all he could do for her, and as for what awaited him later, he had no idea. Guilt was inevitable, for some things could not be undone.

An hour later, the others caught up with Ethan's car. When he and his car were brought before Bane, he wore a devastated expression, seeming to have long foreseen his outcome and had no intention of begging for mercy.

"Where is she?" Bane's tone still sounded light, but Ethan knew this was the calm before the storm.

He smiled before meeting Bane's eyes. "I don't know where they went. We split up halfway."

When Bane heard that, he felt his temples pulsing. "Why?"

With pursed lips, Ethan answered, "No reason. I wanted to do it, so I did."

"Is it because I punished you?" Bane straightened his glasses. "Is this your way

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of getting back at me?"

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"No." Ethan shook his head. "To be more precise, you gave me this job, so even if you punish me, I will never get back at you." Once he got to that, he tried to

persuade Bane. "Mr. Morison, you should stop now before things get worse."

Bane looked at him, and the gentleness on his face disappeared. "I should stop now?"

"Mr. Morison, do you know why Miss Selwyn held back from calling the cops when she could?"

Bane pursed his lips but did not answer.

"If she had called the cops back then, what would things be like now? Mr.

Morison, she still has a glimmer of hope for you and doesn't want to hurt you.

Please, stop whatever this is, and you can still be friends with her."

"Friends?" That word made Bane laugh. His laughter sounded scornful at first, but then it became louder like he was laughing about something funny.

Ethan stood on the side, quietly looking at him with sorrowful eyes.

When Bane stopped laughing, his expression changed as he stared at Ethan

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grimly. "I will never become friends with her, nor do I need any."

"Mr. Morison, forced love has no outcome."

“Oh?” Bane smiled faintly. “It’s up to me whether there’s an outcome. Bring him away.”

When the others behind Ethan heard that order, they seemed somewhat hesitant. “Mr. Morison, what will happen to Mr. Hudson?”

“What will happen to him?” Bane dragged his voice. “I haven’t decided that yet. Just lock him up for the time being.”

Once Ethan was dragged away, someone could not help but ask, “Mr. Morison, Mr. Hudson has made a huge mistake. Are you just going to lock him up?”

At that, Bane looked at the man and asked, “Then, what do you suppose I do about him?”

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That man’s eyes had a hint of cruelty in them. “He’s your assistant, yet he uses your money and resources to backstab you. If it were me... He deserves a brutal punishment. Also, a person like him has become redundant.”

Bane glanced at the man and smiled, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

“Mr. Morison? What do you think?”

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Seeing that Bane was not answering, the man refused to give up and asked. This was a great opportunity for him to get a promotion. Many had been eyeing Ethan’s positions for years, but he did everything perfectly, so it was difficult for them to find a chance to bring him down. Now that they finally pinned something on him, how could they not be anxious to remove him?

“Find her first.” That was Bane’s reply.

That man was slightly unwilling to accept that. “But Mr. Hudson...”

“Is Ethan Hudson the only person of your interest?” Bane’s tone suddenly changed, and

his gaze turned cold as well. Even his body seemed to be exuding an eerie aura.

That man was frightened and dared not say anything except speak meekly, “I’ll bring the

others to search for Miss Selwyn.”

Once those men were gone, Bane pulled a box of cigarettes out of frustration and lit it

- 1. up. He never smoked, but... so many things had happened that he became even more*

agitated as time passed. Did Victoria despise staying with him that much?

He did not know where he lost to Alaric. She was the only woman he had around him,

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and besides her, no woman would ever have his heart, not even a portion. At first, he thought he could gradually capture her heart after all his efforts for five years, but he did not expect...

At that thought, he took a long drag of his cigarette and almost choked.

Cough!

He gently coughed twice, attracting the guards outside to come over and ask him about his condition. “Mr. Morison, are you alright?”

However, Bane did not answer but looked intently at the flickering fire at his fingertips and ordered, “For Mr. Hudson... Lock him up for the moment. Only give him food after Victoria is found.”

“Yes, Mr. Morison.”

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“As for Victoria, she has two children with her, so she wouldn’t have gone far. Focus on the farms nearby and every hotel in the city.”

“Okay. I understand. I’ll relay the orders.”

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That evening, Victoria entered a cheap inn with her two children.

The inn had a dirty environment with a slight moldy smell. When she opened the window to look at the surroundings, she saw a sewer behind them. So, she closed the window and locked them up while pulling the blinds.

Then, she turned around and glanced at the two on the couch. She approached them and coaxed them, “Babies, we’re going to have a rough few days.”

Since Ethan did not give her a lot of money and was unsure when she could return home with the children, she dared not overspend. Most importantly, she was afraid to bring them to expensive hotels. That was because Bane would check those places to find her.

Fortunately, her children were obedient and had no opinion about staying in such a place. They even tried several ways to cheer her up when they noticed she looked down.

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Having been on the road for the whole day, Victoria was tired but afraid to head outside,

so she asked the inn’s owner to bring her some food. The owner brought over some cheese and ham and also considerately gifted some goat’s milk to Victoria’s children.

“The environment here isn’t great, but these are all homemade, and the milk is freshly squeezed. It’s for the kids.”

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Taking the lukewarm goat's milk, Victoria looked gratefully at the inn's owner Thank you."

The owner glanced at her. "You're welcome. It's not easy for a single woman to be out here alone. Are you here to look for a job?"

Since it was a peculiar situation, Victoria could not say anything else and nodded Yes, I planned to find work here and decided to stay here for a few days."

"I see."

The two exchanged casual talk before the inn's owner excused herself, saying she had something to do. Before leaving, she reminded them to lock the door and ignore

anyone who knocked. Victoria agreed but then remembered something and called the owner. "I'm sorry. My things were stolen when I arrived, and I lost my phone. Do you have a phone I can borrow?"

The owner was shocked for a moment and then nodded. "Of course there is. There's a public phone downstairs. You can use it after you finish your meal."

A public phone? Victoria nodded and thanked her. "Thank you. I'll be down in a while.

Once the door was closed, she divided the food for her children. 'Babies, let's put up

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with this for a while. I'll cook you a big meal once we get home."

"Thank you, Mommy."

The children began eating while Victoria was still thinking about the phone. It seemed dangerous to leave her children in the room. What if someone came in after she left?

What if...

After thinking about it, she waited until her babies finished their meal and headed for

the public phone together. That way, her children would be by her side if anything were to happen.

The homemade ham was tasty, so the children ate it delightfully. Meanwhile, Victoria had no appetite but still forced herself to eat some.

“Mommy, we’re done.”

She packed up the food and rose to her feet. “Come on. Let’s head downstairs to use the phone.”

Two minutes later, the trio exited their room. Since they had to find the owner at the reception desk before using the public phone, Victoria kept her children beside her after leaving their room.

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“It’s more dangerous abroad than at home, and we’re not in a particularly safe area, so make sure to stick close to me and don’t take off on your own. Understand?”

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“Yes, Mommy.”

The children followed her downstairs, and she spotted the owner at the reception desk far away. She was smiling while talking to her employees, the public phone not far from them.

Just as Victoria was leading her children toward the phone, she suddenly saw several familiar-looking faces. Her intuition told her something was amiss, so she immediately pulled her children and hid in the corner.

Indeed, she was right because instantaneously, she saw those men heading straight for the reception desk. However, she could not hear what they were saying because of the

distance, so she could only guess what they were talking about from their gestures and expressions. A while later, the inn's owner pointed upstairs.

Seeing that the situation was worsening, Victoria looked around and pulled the children into the bathroom.

About a minute after they entered, they heard the owner leading a group of people up the stairs. As they were not far from those men, Victoria could eavesdrop on their

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discussions from where she was.

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“Once we're upstairs, we will guard both ends of the corridor. We can't let them escape. Otherwise, we'll have to face Mr. Morison's wrath.”

Those men soon headed up, and once they did, Victoria quickly brought the children out of the inn. When she arrived at the entrance, she returned to pick up the phone and dialed a number.

Once she made the call, she did not wait until the other picked up and left the inn.

When the receptionist saw what she did, her eyes filled with confusion. However, Victoria was gone before the owner could stop her, so she muttered something and returned the phone to its place..

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In the meantime, Summer was eating when her phone suddenly rang. She then answered the call without even checking who it was. “Hello?”

Tut–Tut–Tut-

She did not expect to hear the call hang up upon answering it. That's strange, she thought while pulling her phone away from her ear. Then, she saw it was from an

unfamiliar landline. "Did someone call the wrong number?"

Her mutters fell into Erik's ears, and he looked at her, asking, "What's the matter?"

"I got a call from an unknown number. I'm not sure what happened because the call ended right after I answered it."

When he heard that, his eyebrows immediately scrunched together. "An unknown number?" He quickly leaned over to check her phone. "This is a local landline number."

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When Summer heard that, she seemed even more confused. "Why would someone call me using a landline..." With that, she had an epiphany and instantly looked up, meeting Erik's gaze.

About two seconds later, he redialed the number.

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Meanwhile, she watched and waited anxiously. However, they heard an unfamiliar woman's voice, and she spoke in her native tongue. Then, he interacted with her in Entran. "I'm the owner of this number. Did you make a call to me just now?"

Since Summer could not hear what they were talking about, she leaned closer.

"I'm sorry, but I didn't make the call. A strange guest at the inn suddenly ran over and did."

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A strange guest? How can a strange guest make a precise call to Summer's phone? Erik

asked, "Where is she now?"

"My apologies. I'm not sure about that. She walked away after making the call. I thought

it was just a prank but didn't expect the call would go through."

He pursed his lips and narrowed his eyes. "She left? Where did she go?"

"That... I'm unsure. But she's a guest here, so she might return later. I'll call you again if I see her."

"Thank you. Can you tell me the inn's address?"

After the call ended, Summer asked anxiously, "How was it?"

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"I think no one else can precisely dial your number beside her, and she immediately left after calling you. I suppose she's in trouble and needs to leave quickly, so she quickly found a chance to leave us some clues."

Once she listened to Erik's explanation, she thought everything made sense. "You're right. Who else could key my number with the local landline? It must be her. She must be in trouble. I have to tell Alaric right now."

She then got up and ran out to look for him, but someone stopped her before his door.

"What are you doing? Let go of me. I have something important to tell Alaric."

"Miss Jones, it's not our intention to stop you from entering. Mr. Cadogan isn't in his room. He's gone out."

"He's out?" She felt dejected. Why would he be out at such a critical moment? "What about Mr. Hudson?"

"Mr. Hudson left with Mr. Cadogan."

"Why are both of them out at this moment..."

Since she could not find Alaric, Summer took out her phone to call him, hoping he

would answer her call. If she could not get ahold of him again and missed out on the
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best time to save Victoria, she would curse and hate him to death.

She had begun reprimanding him hundreds of times even before she made the call.
However, she did not expect Alaric would immediately pick up the call after it rang.

“Hello.”

When Summer heard the man’s cold voice, she was dumbfounded and froze in her
spot.

“Miss Jones?” Her silence made the man call out her name in confusion.

It was then that she realized he had answered and immediately explained what had
happened, not forgetting to tell him the inn’s address. “I’m sure it’s her. Even if it’s not,
we can’t disregard every chance we have, right? What if it’s her?”

“I’ll head over now.”

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Then, Summer heard Alaric instructing his driver to turn around before returning to her,
saying, “Send me the number.”

“Okay.”

After the call ended, Summer texted Alaric the landline number from earlier.

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At that moment, Erik arrived. “Is everything settled?”

She bit her lip and nodded. He gave her a few inquisitive glances before asking the
person guarding the door. “Is there a car available now?”

The man was startled before nodding. “Yes, there is.”

“Can we use it?”

“Of course, you can. You’re Mr. Cadogan’s guest, so you can use it if necessary.”

Beside them, Summer listened to their conversation and shot Erik a confused look, asking, “Why do you need a car?”

Looking at her, he asked, “What’s the matter? Don’t you want to go?”

“Go...” She finally realized what he meant. He was going to bring her to search for Victoria. Several days had passed since she disappeared, and they finally found somewhere she might be. How could Summer stay at their hotel and wait? She did not mention it only because she was afraid she might cause more trouble to Alaric and his men. Hence, she did not expect Erik to offer to bring her along.

Surprised and nervous, Summer waited until Erik received the keys and led her to the

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car before she pulled his sleeve. “Mr. Ludson, thank you.”

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Stunned, he looked down at the pale hand holding his shirt with an unnoticeable smile.

“You want to thank me? I don’t accept verbal thanks.”

“Huh?” She immediately retracted her hand when she heard that. “You want a physical thank you?”

“Right.” He looked at her face from the corner of his eye. “Do you find a thank you without showing any action to be sincere?”

She looked into his eyes before hesitantly offering. “How about I treat you to food once we return?”

“Is that it?”

The confused Summer wondered what else he would want. She pursed his lips and hesitantly asked, "Then, how about two meals?"

"What I meant is are you going to buy me meals and nothing else?"

She looked at him with puzzled eyes, not knowing what he was implying.

When Erik saw her confused look, he used his finger to knock on her forehead. "Think

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about it."

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Afterward, he got in the car with Summer following behind him. Once she caught up to him, she asked, "Mr. Ludson, can't you be more straightforward? I don't think my brain can fathom what you're trying to say."

He glanced at her and reminded her, "Your seatbelt."

"Oh." She fastened it and looked back at him. "So, Mr. Ludson, what do you mean by physical thank you?"

The next moment, she felt another flick of her forehead as she subconsciously covered it with her hand. Then, she heard him explain, "What I meant to say is, other than two meals, stop giving me nicknames."

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93%

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At the mention of nicknames, Summer instantly felt embarrassed. She usually referred to him by his nickname in private, but for some reason, she accidentally made a slip of the tongue and called him by his nickname to his face.

Just remembering that scene cringed her to the core. Recently though, Erik did not make a fuss about it, probably due to the circumstances.

Now that he mentioned it, she was so embarrassed that she kept clenching her toes and scratching her head before replying, "I understand. I'll stop calling you the devil from now on."

He added, "Other nicknames aren't allowed as well."

She spoke up after a while, "Okay. Can we leave now?"

Once she finished speaking, the car began moving, and she sighed in relief.

After Victoria left the inn, she and the children continued forward. Terrified of being trailed, she could only try to walk toward the crowd. Luckily for them, it was not nighttime yet, so many people were still out on the streets. If she brought the children

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into the crowd, it would be difficult for others to spot them.

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She had a stern expression because she knew she could not stay at hotels anymore. At

first, she thought she only had to steer clear of high-end hotels but did not expect Bane would scrutinize cheap inns too. When she thought about it, it made sense because she barely had money or a phone with her, so she could only stay at such an inn with the amount Ethan gave her.

As for the call she made earlier, she was unsure whether Summer received the call because it was from an unknown number. Would Summer have guessed it was from her? More importantly, although she timed her departure, someone was at the reception desk. What if the receptionist ended the call before it got through to her? If

that were the case, things would be disastrous.

“Mommy, where are we going now?”

Hearing that, Victoria looked around their surroundings, not knowing what to answer.

Since they could not stay at hotels, and she had children with her, where could they go?

It was still early now, but later...

The more she thought about it, the more frustrated she became.

Coincidentally, they passed by a grocery store, where she did not think twice before

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pulling her children inside. She realized it was one of those massive superstores, and this one just happened to be open for 24 hours. Then, she came to a decision and smiled at her children. “Why don’t we play some games upstairs?”

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They could not find somewhere to sleep for the night, and their situation would either end with Summer finding them first or Bane’s men. If she were alone, she would have found somewhere to hide, but it was more difficult when she had children. She could not afford to play this cat-and-mouse game, nor could she put her children in danger, so she could only try to stay in the crowd and hold on.

Since many were inside the arcade upstairs, the three instantly disappeared into the crowd upon entering. If those men came looking, they would need time to scan the place. A reception table was there as well, but Victoria was unsure whether they had a phone she could borrow.

She let the children play while she went to check out the reception desk. Coincidentally,

a young woman approached her while talking on the phone. She sounded frustrated, and Victoria heard her arguing on her phone, "Mom, I'll come home later. I'm a grown-up, so you don't have to worry about me."

"I got it!" In the end, the young woman hung up impatiently.

Seeing the woman about to brush past her, Victoria blocked her way. "Hello."

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The young woman was startled when she saw Victoria. Since she was facing a stranger, her temper subsided as she looked at her in confusion. "Is there something I can help you with?"

Victoria smiled. "Hello, young lady. Can I borrow your phone for a bit?"

Hearing that, the young woman scrunched her nose. "No. Don't you grownups have your phone? Are you trying to trick me?"

Indeed, it was not easy to borrow someone else's phone. Victoria bit her lip and was about to explain when Nicole came over from behind her. The kid gently grabbed the young woman's hand, explaining, "Miss, a burglar took my mommy's phone, and we don't have any money. So, we want to call my dad and ask him to get us."

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When she spoke, her voice sounded gentle and delicate. Adding to her pretty looks, milky-white skin, and large eyes, she looked just like a doll. Her appearance could easily

melt one's heart, breaking down their defense.

All this while, Victoria wanted to speak but stopped and observed the situation. As she had expected, the young woman seemed to waver a little after listening to Nicole's explanation. "Your... Your phone got stolen?"

Nicole blinked her watery eyes while nodding, rendering her mother speechless. "So,

Chapter 405 Holding On Until Help Arrives

5/6

Miss, can you lend us your phone for a while? It's just a while! We'll return it to you after

making a call."

Her mother watched from the side as pearl-like tears fell from the kid's eyes, feeling a pang in her heart. If she had not known Nicole was such a good actress, she would have thought the little fellow was crying.

Under Nicole's insistence, the young woman caved in and looked at her phone before glancing at the kid. "A-Alright then, but I can only lend it to you for a while, and you can only make the call while I watch. You can't walk away." Once she finished, she gave Victoria her phone.

Looking at the phone, Victoria quickly retrieved it with gratitude. "Thank you." Then, she rapidly dialed Summer's number. While waiting for her to answer the call, Victoria looked around the place to see if any suspicious people were around.

Tut-Tut-

The phone rang once and was immediately answered. "Victoria? Is that you?"

"Summer!"

Having finally heard Victoria's voice after several days, Summer was so excited that she

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choked up. Before she could say anything else, Erik, beside her, gestured for her to put it on speaker.

She knew he had a lot of ideas, so she did as told. After the call was put on speaker, he asked, "Where are you now? Do you have the coordinates?"

When Victoria heard the man's voice, she was unsurprised and told him where she was.

At the same time, Summer entered the coordinates and searched online before enlarging it.

"We're about an hour away."

"An hour? Are you on the way here?"

"Yes. We're heading to where you are. Hide among the crowd or find a place. Try to hold

on until we arrive."

His calm voice assured Victoria. "Okay, I understand."

Chapter 406

93%

1/7

The moment she hung up the phone, Victoria's mood became completely different.

Just an hour. In an hour, I'll no longer be alone and helpless. I'll have Summer as well as the "devil" she talked about by my side by then. But... the person she was inwardly expecting never came. Is Summer unable to reach him, or is he unwilling to come looking for me after knowing what happened, thinking it is too much trouble?

As her mind dwelled on this, she began feeling hurt deep down. However, she soon pulled herself together and returned the phone to the girl before her. She thanked the girl, "Thank you for lending your phone to us."

In reality, the girl had worried that she might've been tricked when she lent her phone.

Not expecting to actually get her phone back afterward, she pursed her lips while taking it. Then, looking at Nicole and Nathan next to the woman, she asked in a whisper, "Are you three going to hang out here?"

Seeing that the girl was alone, Victoria wanted to nod at first, but then she recalled that they couldn't stay for long. She had no choice but to say instead, "The kids' father is coming to pick us up, so we can't stay here for long. We may leave at any time. Since you lent me your phone, let me give you money to play games, okay?"

The girl shook her head. "No, you don't have to. That's the least I can do."

93%

Chapter 406 I'm Not Protecting You Well Enough

2/7

Victoria patted her on the head. In the end, she held out to the girl one of the banknotes she had gotten from Ethan. "Here, take this. Think of it as a thank-you present."

The girl took it with some hesitation.

Victoria asked, "By the way, are you out alone? You have to be careful at this time of night. Also, if you come across some strangers asking to borrow your phone like this, just say no if you're scared. Not everyone is like us. You understand?" Fearing that the girl might get tricked next time, she reminded her about the dangers of lending her phone to strangers.

To her surprise, after listening to her words, the girl pursed her lips for a moment. She said, "But you three wouldn't be able to go home if I didn't lend my phone to you, right?"

Victoria was deeply touched by her reply. "Thank you so much, good girl. You should go

home now. Be careful."

The girl looked at them somewhat reluctantly, though.

Knowing that they couldn't stay here any longer, Victoria stood up and took the two little ones by the hand. She said to the girl, "We have to go."

"Where are you going? Do you live around here? Are we going to meet again in the future?"

3/7

Victoria paused for a moment. Just when she wanted to speak, she heard Nicole reply, "Sis, I'll call you once we get home safely."

The girl's eyes lit up at her words. "Really? You'll come to see me again?"

"Mm-hmm." Nicole nodded heavily.

The girl seemed to have a hard time believing it, so she could only look at Victoria with inquiring eyes. After Victoria nodded, she finally cracked a smile of satisfaction. "Alright, then, I'm going home for today. But please remember to call me."

"Goodbye."

Victoria took the kids to a more crowded place while still hiding in the crowd. An hour, huh... I've got to hang on until they arrive. Not daring to stay alone in one place, she moved around randomly, observing her surroundings while glancing at the wall clock from time to time. Before she knew it, 40 minutes had passed. Seems like I've chosen the right place. They probably went looking for me in some other places, so they didn't expect for the time being that I'd bring my kids straight to an amusement park. Perhaps I can wait here until Summer and Erik find me right away. She prayed in her heart.

Chapter 406 I'm Not Protecting You Well Enough

Suddenly, Nicole stumbled while walking next to her.

At the sight of this, Victoria immediately crouched down. "What's wrong?"

Nicole shook her head. "I'm fine, Mommy."

4/7

However, Victoria quickly noticed that something was wrong with her and asked with a serious face, "Did you sprain your ankle? Let me take a look for you."

"Mommy, I'm fine, really-"

Just then, a commotion broke out at the entrance.

Squatting, Victoria looked up toward the sound. At a glance, she saw the few people she had spotted earlier at the hotel coming toward the amusement park. They looked ferocious as if wanting to come in for a fight. Frightened by their appearance, a number of kids ran away from them, screaming.

Her countenance changed at the sight of them. I can't believe they're actually here after just over 40 minutes! Now, it was no longer feasible for her and the kids to stay here safely until Summer and Erik came to pick them up.

She looked around, only to find that the park had only one exit. Biting her lower lip, she

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stood up and picked Nicole up at once. After getting Nathan to follow her from behind, she went to hide in another boisterous crowd.

"Look for her now!"

She heard those men yell loudly at the crowd, saying they were here to look for a child who had run away from home. They even picked up the tab for everyone's expenses, in addition to offering a cash payment to whoever was willing to cooperate and get out. At first, everyone thought they were strange and refused to pay any mind to them. Gradually, however, many children went over to receive money from them. Realizing

that they could really receive money from these guys, more and more people stopped playing games and ran over to get the money, crowding the entrance to the hilt.

Victoria had wanted to slip out along with the crowd, but after getting near the entrance, she noticed a lot of men guarding it. With her two children, she was really noticeable, thus making it totally impossible to sneak away.

Watching the crowd disperse, Nathan anxiously tugged at her collar. "Mommy, what should we do now?"

Victoria looked around and found a washroom in the park. She said under her breath, "We'll get exposed if we keep staying here. Let's hide in the washroom for now."

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The three of them went to hide in the washroom. Normally, Nathan wouldn't enter the ladies' room with Victoria, but given the exceptional circumstances this time, she brought him in right away. Luckily, everyone had gone out to receive money at this time, so nobody was staying in the washroom at all.

The washroom was empty. After pondering for a moment, Victoria immediately hardened her heart and locked the main door. Then, she led the two children to hide in one of the clean stalls.

After putting down the toilet lid, she got Nicole to sit on it and took off her shoes for her. Only then did she notice that Nicole's ankle was all red and swollen, which looked frightening. If Nicole had only been hurt just now, her ankle wouldn't have become so swollen. Such a swelling could only mean that she must have been enduring it for a long time.

In an instant, Victoria's eyes filmed over. She reached out and clasped Nicole in her arms. She knew her own daughter better than anyone else. This little girl was always the most spoiled. Whenever she got hurt even in the slightest, she would pester her mother to blow the pain away for her, or she would throw tantrums like a baby. In short, she was just spoiled to a fault. But now, despite her foot hurting like this, she never made a sound along the way. Not only that, she had helped Victoria a lot. She probably had stumbled just now because it really hurt too much.

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Victoria closed her eyes, which quickly moistened with tears. "Sorry, Nicole. I'm not protecting you well enough."

7/7

Chapter 407 Make It Up to You

Chapter 407

At this moment, she was really filled with great remorse. She wasn't just blaming herself for not taking good care of Nicole. Above all, she didn't even know when and how her daughter had hurt her ankle.

Seeing her eyes flowing with tears, Nicole panicked as well. "Don't cry, Mommy. It doesn't hurt at all."

17

Being the older of the twins, Nathan trotted over at this time, standing on tiptoe to help Victoria wipe the tears away.

Seeing how much they cared about her, Victoria could only fight back her tears. She said to them, "I'll make it up to you two once we get back."

"It's okay, Mommy. This isn't your fault."

“Alright, let’s stop talking from now on. As for your foot, Nicole... let me rub it a little for you.”

Victoria helped Nicole massage the aching spot gently. This instantly brought tears of pain to Nicole’s eyes, but she held them back for fear that her mother would get worried.

Chapter 407 Make It Up to You

At the sight of this, Nathan gingerly held out his hand for his sister to hold onto.

2/7

The three of them stayed in the washroom. Since they had no cell phone, they couldn’t check the time, so Victoria had no idea how much time had passed. All she could do was lightly massage the swelling on Nicole’s ankle again and again. After a long time, she finally withdrew her hand.

After that, she made a rough estimation. She felt that ten minutes had probably passed since just now, which meant that Summer and Erik would probably arrive in another ten minutes. Or perhaps they had a smooth journey and had already gotten here. At this very moment, all she could do was imagine it in her heart.

Just then, there came a sound from the outside—someone was turning the doorknob of the washroom door. Since there were only the three of them holding their breaths in the washroom, they heard the sound with exceptional clarity.

“This door is locked.”

“Locked? Why is the washroom locked from the inside? Something’s got to be fishy here. Break it down.”

“It’s not gonna be easy to break this door down, I’m afraid. It’s made of heavy material.”

Chapter 407 Make It Up to You

“Break the lock, then.”

Victoria held her breath in fear. Judging from their conversation, these men seemed very violent. Biting her lower lip, she closed her eyes as if waiting to be tortured.

3/7

There was silence outside for a while, immediately followed by the sound of something heavy banging on the door lock. Bang! Bang! The sounds reverberated throughout the washroom one after another. The bangs were loud, and the door was being hit with a tremendous force, so tremendous that Victoria and her kids could feel the vibration while standing with their backs pressed against the wall.

Nicole tugged at Victoria’s shirt in fear.

Victoria immediately held her fingers and pursed her lips. “Don’t worry. Mommy’s here.”

Emboldened by her words, the two little ones ducked behind her simultaneously.

At the sound of the door lock being hit again and again, Victoria’s heart sank lower and lower until it almost sank into the depths of despair. After a long time, she crouched down and said to her children, “We’ll go back with them when the door opens.” Then, she added, “Don’t worry. Mr. Bane probably won’t hurt us.”

The two little ones pressed their lips together without answering her.

Chapter 407 Make It Up to You

Bang! Silence returned after a loud bang. The door lock had probably been broken.

Right after that, the door was kicked open.

4/7

They’re here now. Have we spent more than 15 minutes here? That should be the case no matter how I estimate it. But why are Summer and Erik yet to arrive? Did they get stuck in traffic on their way here, or did they get intercepted by Bane’s men?

The doors to the stalls were opened one after another. Standing in the stall at the very end, Victoria listened as the sound got closer and closer. The two little ones hugged her

tighter, even burying their faces in her chest.

She bit her lower lip, feeling really frustrated and resentful. Why are we still unable to get away after getting in touch with Summer? I shouldn't have stayed here. Something's

wrong with my judgment; I should've gone somewhere else after staying here for some time. Perhaps... I'd still stand a chance if I had done that.

Eventually, she saw a pair of shoes coming in front of the stall at the end where they were in. For fear of getting hit by the door, she had led the kids to hide in the back corner beforehand. Her breathing paused as she watched the pair of shoes come near the door.

She thought the person would break the door down instantly. To her surprise, the man stopped at the door, saying, "Miss Selwyn, I know you and your kids are inside. Mr.

Chapter 407 Make It Up to You

Morison only meant to find you, so we don't want to hurt you. So, if you don't want yourself and your kids to get hurt, please cooperate and come out by yourselves.

Otherwise, it's hard to say if you'll get hurt when I kick this door open. I've got great strength, by the way."

5/7

Victoria quietly listened to these words. A few seconds later, her lips parted. Just when she was about to speak, however, she heard another loud bang outside.

Startled, she subconsciously tightened her arms around her children, who were also frightened. At first, she thought the person had kicked at the door directly out of

impatience. However, the door was still intact after the loud bang, which was then followed by the sounds of a struggle.

What's going on this time? Victoria was unable to see anything from inside the stall. All she could hear were the sounds of a man's punches landing on somebody's flesh outside.

Nicole instinctively opened her mouth in Victoria's arms, but she pressed her index finger to her lips just in time to signal her not to speak. "Shh!"

Although the man had been stopped from coming inside, Victoria wasn't happy about this. Summer and Erik weren't supposed to be capable of this unless they had called the police. However, if the police had been called, the cops should've been heard

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warning those guys to put up their hands just now instead of scuffling with them right
6/7

away. Therefore, she had no idea whom these newcomers belonged to or whether they were good guys or bad guys, which made her feel even more nervous. What if they belong to some dark forces over here? Will the kids and I be able to get away by then? At the thought of this, she tightened her arms around the two little ones. "Keep quiet!" she whispered.

The fight outside continued for a long time. Finally, it ended, restoring silence to the surroundings.

Still, Victoria had never heard anyone talking, so she couldn't even figure out whom these people belonged to. She only hoped that if they weren't coming to rescue her, they would leave as soon as possible without noticing she was here. However, her hopes were dashed when she heard the sound of steady footsteps made by shoes

landing on the floor. Then, a pair of shoes stopped right in front of the stall where she was in. In an instant, she wished she were dead.

The door was given a push, but it didn't budge. Next, an unfamiliar male voice could be heard speaking in Entran. It said, "Aimilios, get the door open."

An unfamiliar tone of voice. They're not one of those helping me out... Hearing that the person wanted to get the door open, Victoria feared that the kids would get hurt once they bust the door down and forced their way in. Moreover, "Aimilios" sounded like the name of a man of great strength. She had no choice but to stand up and shout loudly, "Don't do that! I'll open the door by myself."

Her words were instantly met with silence outside.

Looking at the fastened door lock, Victoria took a deep breath and then unfastened it.

□

Chapter 408

The two kids cowered behind her simultaneously, their hands clinging to her shirt.

Having braced herself, Victoria flung the door open after unlocking it. The words she had intended to say rushed out of her mouth. "I'll go with you guys. Just don't hurt my kids and-"

1/7

However, before she could finish her sentence, she felt everything go black before her eyes; she was wrapped in an embrace. "Get off-" Realizing what was happening, she subconsciously tried to shove the person away, only to be startled when a familiar scent assailed her nostrils. This is...

Just then, the man tightened his arms around her, holding her tightly as if to make her a part of his own body.

Even so, Victoria didn't feel any pain at all. Her eyes glistened, misting over with tears in

only an instant. At the same time, she heard the two kids cry out behind her, "Mr. Night!"

It's him. It really is him!

She never thought that it was actually Alaric who had come looking for her. She never mentioned him over the phone with Summer earlier, and perhaps due to the urgent

Chapter 408 Are You Sure You Want to Go With Him?

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situation, she didn't hear Summer mention him either. Not knowing if Summer had told the man about this, she thought he was still in the dark about what had happened. In her heart, she never expected him to come to her rescue.

But little did she think Alaric would show up in front of her without warning.

She gently pushed him away with her hands pressing his chest. However, this tiny movement seemed to provoke him, causing him to clasp her to his chest once again.

Not expecting him to tightly embrace her again, Victoria was startled. She rested her chin on the man's shoulder.

At the sight of this, Terrance let out a cough with his hand over his mouth. "Ahem! Mr. Cadogan, we'd better get out of here now. Otherwise, we might have a bit of trouble if we come across their men again."

Only then did the large hands that had been holding onto Victoria relax their grip before slowly letting go. After taking a step back, Alaric looked down at her, who had visibly lost a great deal of weight. His thin lips almost compressed into a thin line in displeasure. He placed his hand on top of her head, then brought it down to cup her cheek. All he said was, "You've lost weight."

Hearing this from the man, Victoria couldn't help but burst into tears, having held back her tears just now.

Alaric tenderly wiped her tears away before bending down to kiss her on the eyelids. He

said in a husky voice, "Let's go home." With that, he took her by the hand and led her out

of the washroom stall.

The two little ones threw themselves at him from behind. "Mr. Night!"

Alaric's lips curled into a smile as he patted them on the head. "Uh-huh. It's been a while, sweeties."

Back in the country, the twins had noticed signs of a thawing relationship between their mother and Alaric. And now, this was his first time showing up in front of them while

they were on the run in a foreign country, which felt like a much-needed rain after a long

drought. Therefore, one might as well say that they became very well-disposed to him at this moment. They said to Terrance, "Hi, Mr. Levane."

Terrance came over and took them by the hand to keep them from bothering Victoria and his boss. He said to them, "Come on, let me get you two out of here now."

"Wait a minute." Victoria stopped him as she recalled something. "Nicole's foot is hurt," she explained. After that, she went over and tried to pick the girl up.

Chapter 408 Are You Sure You Want to Go

Before she crouched down, however, she was stopped by Alaric. "Let me do it." He bent

down and picked Nicole up on his own, upon which Nicole threw her arms around his neck, saying, "Thank you, Mr. Night."

"Let's go."

•

Victoria took Nathan by the hand and walked on as they left the place together.

Unexpectedly, just when they reached the entrance, a group of people surrounded them, blocking their way completely.

Victoria's heart sank at the sight of these people. "It's their men."

Alaric instinctively pulled her toward him with his arms around her. "I'm here."

Victoria also leaned closer to him unconsciously. After pursing her lips, she asked, "You didn't call the police, did you?"

Alaric paused for a moment before lowering his eyes to look at her. "Why? Are you worried that I'd

call the police to get him arrested?"

Victoria's eyes lowered under the gaze of the man's pitch-black eyes. "I don't want to hurt him. He helped me a lot in the past, after all."

Chapter 408 Are You Sure You

"He's hurting you right now."

"He only took me away, but he didn't hurt me," stressed Victoria. "He didn't hurt me and the kids."

Alaric frowned slightly. It was true that he didn't call the police: Nevertheless, he couldn't help feeling jealous deep down when he saw Victoria defend and speak for Bane like this in front of himself.

Just then, Bane stepped out of the crowd, cutting short their conversation. As soon as he stepped out, he accurately spotted Victoria among the crowd with his gaze. He fixed his eyes on her, as if he hadn't noticed Alaric at all.

Fixed by the man's stare, Victoria pursed her lips. Just when she subconsciously tried

to avoid his gaze, Alaric wrapped his arms around her. After clasping her to his chest, he looked straight into Bane's eyes, as if wanting to declare her his in a fit of possessiveness.

Seeing the large hand on Victoria's supple waist, Bane finally shifted his gaze a little to meet Alaric's. A moment later, he curled his lips into a smile. "It's been a while."

Alaric stared at him frostily without answering him.

Chapter 408 Are You Sure You Want to Go With Him?

6/7

"It's been a while since we last saw each other, Alaric. That being said, don't you think it's rather rude of you to try to take my people away without asking for my permission?"

"Your people?" Alaric let out a sneer. "Since when did she become one of your people? Why didn't I know that?"

The two men were eyeball to eyeball, and so were their men. Those with weapons held onto their weapons, whereas those without weapons got into position and were only waiting for their boss' command.

At the sight of this, the man next to Bane who had previously badmouthed Ethan whispered into Bane's ear, "Mr. Morison, why waste time talking to them? Just go straight over and grab Miss Selwyn!"

Bane's countenance instantly changed at his words. "No, that won't do." They weren't the only ones here; Victoria, Nicole, and Nathan were here too. It didn't matter if he got injured when both sides got into a fight, but what if the three of them got injured by the weapons? Hence, he had no choice but to sullenly watch Victoria being protected by the man next to her. Had he known earlier that Ethan would suddenly betray him, he would've probably kept one of the kids by his side. That way, she would have something

to worry about if she wanted to leave. "Victoria," he called her name in a faint voice while looking at her. Then, he asked, "Are you sure you want to go with him?"

Victoria didn't answer.

"Have you forgotten what he did to you five years ago?"

"What he did to me five years ago is none of your business," Victoria replied in a grim

voice. "And besides, I don't like being confined." She cast a glance at Nathan and Nicole

beside her. "Even if I'm not going back to Alaric's side, I won't go back with you either."

Chapter 409

She didn't return to her home country to get back together with Alaric. It was a complete accident that things had come to this, including that she never expected Bane to have her confined and even hurt Ethan. At the thought of this, she instantly recalled Ethan, who had helped her escape. She asked, "Where is Ethan?"

A faint smirk curved Bane's lips at her question. "Ethan? Victoria, if you want to know about him, then come back with me."

Victoria pursed her lips. Before she could answer, Alaric's grip tightened on her waist.

He replied frostily, "You want to take her away? Don't you even think about it!"

Bane looked at Victoria with a smile, though. "Victoria, I don't listen to other people. I only listen to you, so tell me—would you go back with me? I promise that as long as you go back with me, Ethan will be fine."

Victoria replied, "Are you threatening me? He's your assistant, not mine."

"Mm—hmm." Bane nodded. "Of course, I know he is my assistant. But he set my people free despite being my assistant. Say, Victoria, if someone like him goes unpunished, wouldn't those working under me follow his example in the future?"

Chapter 409 Don't Think Twice Anymore

2/6

Victoria realized that the man was trying to use Ethan to browbeat her into going back with him. He just knew that with her soft heart, she would be afraid of getting others involved in this. And now, he had nothing in hand but this one bargaining chip.

However, if he wanted to use Ethan to keep a tight rein on her, then Ethan would have to be safe and sound, or he would lose this bargaining chip. After figuring this out, she replied icily, "Do you think I'll go back with you for fear of Ethan getting hurt? In that case, let me tell you right now: if I would go back with you, I wouldn't have chosen to come out with Ethan back then. He had prepared himself for this, and I wouldn't let him down either."

Bane fell silent for a long time at her reply, though his lips curled slightly. "Is that so?" he said in a soft voice that betrayed little emotion. "Well, seems like he's of no use to me anymore."

Victoria's heart sank at the man's words. Suddenly, she had a bad feeling about this. Supposedly, Bane wouldn't lay a heavy hand on his own assistant, but she recalled his childhood experiences, as well as Ethan's pale face several days ago. Back when she got out of the car, Ethan's forehead even broke out in a cold sweat; he seemed to be in a dire situation. He's really cruel to Ethan despite the latter being one of his own men. At the thought of this, she bit her lower lip, her determination wavering.

Just when she faltered, the hand that had been placed on her waist suddenly held her

Chapter 409 Don't Think Twice Anymore

wrist. Alaric whispered to her, "Don't fall for it."

Victoria looked up at him.

“He’s setting a trap for you. If you act more and more worried, you’ll fall for his trick.”

3/6

Victoria couldn’t help but bite her lower lip at his words. She replied under her breath, “I know I can’t fall for his trick, of course. But it’s true that without Ethan’s help, we wouldn’t have had a chance to escape.”

Alaric raised an eyebrow at her words. “So, this Ethan guy is my benefactor as well?”

Victoria was puzzled at once. “Your benefactor?”

“What’s yours is mine.”

Speechless, Victoria subconsciously darted a glance at Nicole and Nathan, both of whom sensibly averted their eyes.

“Don’t worry. If this Ethan guy is really like what you said, I’ll help him.”

“How?”

Alaric shot a look at her. “Well, you don’t have to worry about this. Our top priority right now is to bring you back. So, don’t believe whatever he says.”

Chapter 409 Don’t Think Twice Anymore

now is to bring you back. So, don’t believe whatever he says.”

4/6

Bane’s hands involuntarily clenched into fists by his sides as he watched the couple whisper to each other from a distance. When did she ever whisper to me like this when she was around me? Jealousy instantly welled up in him, turning him into a green-eyed monster as if having absorbed some magical nutrients.

At the sight of this, a sinister gleam flickered across the eyes of the man beside him.

“Actually, Mr. Morison, you’re not letting us snatch Miss Selwyn and her children just because you’re afraid of hurting them, aren’t you? But the real outcome is, neither the people on our side nor those on their side would want to hurt her. So, even if we get

into a fight, Miss Selwyn and her children will probably be safe,” he said. Then, he persuaded, “But if we don’t do anything, we’ll either get caught in a deadlock here or have to watch them take Miss Selwyn and her children away.”

Bane didn’t answer; he was probably hesitating.

Seeing that his convictions were wavering, the man continued fanning the flames.

“Just think about this, Mr. Morison. If we really let those on the other side take Miss Selwyn back, will we still have the chance to invite her over? Most importantly, this is the only chance we’ve got. If we don’t make use of it, we may not get another chance.”

The phrase “the only chance” reminded Bane, whose lips almost compressed into a 5/6

thin line as he gazed from a distance at Victoria, whose hand was being held in Alaric’s.

That’s right. This is probably my last chance. If I let Alaric take her back, will I still stand a chance?

“Mr. Morison, our men are all gathered here, anyway. Just say the word, and I’ll risk my life to spring forward and snatch Miss Selwyn and her kids.”

Snatch them, huh...

“Don’t think twice anymore, Mr. Morison. We’ve got so many people here; surely we can make it.”

Bane’s eyes were still fixed on the couple’s interlocked hands, though. In his mind, he was wondering whether she would agree to it if he were the one standing next to her at this moment and wanted to hold her hand. It seemed that over the long time he had spent taking care of her, he had never clasped her hand like this, nor had he ever kissed

her for an instant. Only occasionally, he would give her a gentle hug when she wasn’t

prepared. He had never done anything more intimate than that with her. However, that pair of hands were so fair and smooth, with prominent knuckles. How good it must feel to the touch if I get to hold them in mine. But would she let me hold her hand as

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obediently as when Alaric holds her hand? No, she'll certainly resist it and then stare at me with a frown before pulling her hand out of my grasp.

Chapter 409 Don't Think Twice Anymore

6/6

It's been five years now. Turns out that despite us spending such a long time together, I never got her to warm to me, and she never developed any feelings for me either. That's

why I can imagine how reluctant she'd be if I wanted to hold her hand. The mere thought of this made his heart ache, as though a rusty knife were slowly torturing his heart without ever being able to give him a quick death.

Jealousy surged through him as the man beside him kept urging him to give the order.

In the end, his eyes finally became gloomy and dark.

The calm before the storm ended at last.

Looking at the woman's slender figure and the two adorable kids, he ultimately ordered, "Just do it, but don't hurt them. If they get hurt in the slightest, you can forget about working by my side."

Chapter 410 Fearful

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At Bane's order, the man beside him finally broke into a triumphant smirk. He looked up,

his gaze resting on Victoria across from them. Suddenly, he waved his arms, shouting,

“Come on, guys! Seize Miss Selwyn and her kids back for our boss!”

The moment he put up his hands, Victoria sensed something was wrong. Just before she could speak, Alaric wrapped his arm around her waist and whispered, “Let’s go.” She hurriedly took Nathan by the hand as they turned around together.

“Stop them!” yelled Terrance in a manner untypical of his usually cultured demeanor before he quickly caught up with them. They had foreseen this before coming here. If both sides were to get into a fight, their first priority would certainly be to take Victoria away before anything else. Still, somebody had to stay behind to deal with the aftermath.

Seeing those men charge toward Bane’s underlings, Victoria also figured out their intentions. Before she could respond, however, she was shoved into the car, followed by Nicole and Nathan. Then, Terrance quickly hopped into the passenger seat. Just when she thought Alaric would leave with them, she found that instead of coming with them, the man had been standing where he was after getting her and the kids into the car.

Her gaze fell upon his face. She asked worriedly, “Aren’t you coming with us?”

“Terrance will escort you to a safe place.”

Victoria’s beautiful eyebrows snapped together. ‘What about you?’

“I’ll come to you once I’m through dealing with the stuff over here.”

Victoria bit her lower lip, unable to say a word. What am I supposed to say? Can I ask him to go with me? “You-”

No sooner had Victoria’s lips parted than Alaric suddenly bent down before her eyes. He kissed her slightly parted lips, his hand holding the back of her head.

“Mmm!” Victoria was caught unprepared by the kiss. Then, realizing what was

happening, she unconsciously tried to push the man away. Just then, he backed away on his own, but instead of leaving, he pressed his forehead to hers. "Wait for me," he whispered in a husky voice before relaxing his grip on the back of her head. After that, he ordered Terrance, "Protect her and my kids."

Terrance nodded. "Please rest assured, Mr. Cadogan. I'll protect Miss Selwyn—even at the cost of my life."

With that, Alaric shut the car door with Victoria watching.

Leaning over the car window, Victoria watched Alaric's face disappear into the distance until she couldn't see him anymore.

"Don't worry, Miss Selwyn. Mr. Cadogan will be fine." Terrance's voice rang from the front in an effort to comfort her.

Victoria bit her lower lip, which seemed to still have the scent of Alaric's kiss on it. How could she not be worried? The scene was turning into a fight with weapons, plus they were in a foreign country. What if some of these men had guns? She had thought that she would be relieved after being rescued, so she never thought she would remain in fear after that.

Perhaps due to their blood connections, the two little ones also sensed her anxiety.

They held her hand simultaneously. "Mommy."

At this moment, however, all Victoria could do was manage a forced smile at them. "I'm fine. We're safe now," she said, taking them into her arms. She closed her eyes, knowing

that she was only saying so to comfort them. In reality, she was worried to death.

Compared to her, Alaric was in much greater danger against Bane. Bane wouldn't hurt her, but what about Alaric? In short, she dared not even think about it. All she could do was hope that he would come back safe and sound.

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A while later, Terrance's phone rang. "Hello? Yeah, we've picked up Miss Selwyn. She's in the car right now."

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At the mention of her name, Victoria looked up at Terrance. "Who is it?"

Terrance handed the phone directly to her. "Miss Selwyn, it's your best friend Miss Jones."

Hearing that it was Summer, Victoria immediately picked up the phone. "Summer!"

"Victoria!" Summer sounded even more agitated than Victoria. "Alaric found you at last! Sorry, our car broke down on our way there. What bad luck! It totally held up our opportunity to save you! Thankfully, Alaric found you."

Their car broke down? No wonder I haven't seen them until now. "Where are you right now, then?"

"Oh, we're okay. The devil is here, so he'll deal with it. I just happened to get through to Mr. Levane on the phone."

"Good to hear that."

"I'll come to you when I get back."

"Alright."

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The two hung up after talking for a while. With her car broken down, Summer was also in trouble right now.

After returning the phone to Terrance, Victoria asked, "How did you guys find me?"

Terrance put away his phone before explaining in a soft voice, "Actually, Miss Jones had been sending us information the whole time. We hurried here after getting word of

you staying at a hotel, but when we arrived, we didn't know where exactly you were. It was Miss Jones who continued to call us afterward and let us know about it."

"I see." Only now did Victoria understand what had happened. As it turned out, Alaric had arrived here long ago; it was just that she didn't get in touch with him. She had thought that he wouldn't show up because he wasn't answering the phone when she had previously tried to call him. Because of that, she dared not try to call him for fear of wasting the hard-earned opportunity to ask for help.

Terrance seemed to know what she was thinking. Just when she thought about this, he asked right away, "Miss Selwyn, why didn't you call Mr. Cadogan?"

"I did, but he didn't answer the phone at the time, did he? I was afraid of wasting the opportunity. After all, as you probably know, I wasn't in a safe situation at the time."

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Terrance rubbed his nose in embarrassment at her reply. "Well, you're right. It's true that

Mr. Cadogan was wrong for not answering your phone call at the time. That being said, Miss Selwyn, allow me to put in a word for him. He didn't answer your phone back then because he flew out of the country as soon as he figured that something might've happened to you."

"Is that so?" asked Victoria. Well, he doesn't have to lie to me since they're already here right now. "So, when I called you guys, you guys were-

"We were on the plane."

At hearing this, the grudge in Victoria's heart vanished. Indeed, she was bothered by the

fact that he didn't answer the phone as soon as she called him and hadn't been heard

from since because he was nowhere to be found when she needed him. But now, after being told that he didn't answer the phone because he was on the plane, she finally got over it.

Terrance continued, "Mr. Cadogan has been worried about you. After getting off the plane, we went out looking for you right away, so we didn't manage to answer the phone when Miss Jones called us in the middle of it. Well, it was our fault for not being thoughtful enough, but Miss Jones roasted Mr. Cadogan after that. Now, whenever he gets a phone call, he'll answer it immediately."

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"Summer roasted him?" Victoria felt rather amused at hearing this. She never expected Summer to be so bold, though her heart warmed at the thought of her mustering up the courage to reprove the man. As expected, my bestie is the best person in the world.