

Departure with a Belly Chapter 516

Departure with a Belly Chapter 516

Chapter 516 Can Definitely Keep Your Belly Full

Both of them froze in unison after Victoria uttered those words.

Alaric instinctively glanced at Victoria, who dazedly stood there and only came back to her senses. after a while.

“A company? I have a company?” she exclaimed.

Alaric thought she had regained her memory at first, but he quickly realized upon hearing her follow-up question that she had unconsciously said that.

At the thought of her company, he began to remember the twists and turns they went through when they first reunited.

If you’re listening to me, Big Man, even if you can restore her memory, please let her remember something else. Don’t remind her of those unhappy things. She will probably have a bad impression of me if she only remembers what I did wrong.

Thinking of this, Alaric immediately spoke up. “I’ll take care of the company for you. If you want to have fun, just come and enjoy yourself without worrying about anything else.”

“You’ll help me?” Victoria blinked. “But shouldn’t you also have your own career?”

“Well, I can manage both sides. What’s the problem with taking care of my wife?” Alaric snaked an arm around her waist and led her in another direction as he spoke. He was afraid that she might remember the memories of him making trouble for her in the beginning. Her not recalling the good memories could affect their relationship.

Indeed, Victoria’s thoughts were quickly diverted by his words, and she didn’t mention the company again. Instead, she asked about things she wasn’t quite clear about, such as when they got to know each other and got married.

When it came to things that benefited him, Alaric was more than happy to tell her. Everything soon became clear to Victoria after she listened to him.

“So, we were childhood sweethearts?” she asked.

“Right.” Alaric caressed the back of her head. “You used to follow me around all the time when we were kids.”

She raised an eyebrow in disbelief. “How is that possible?”

“Tsk! You’re denying it now that your memory’s gone? If I asked you right now if you liked me, would you also say you didn’t?”

“What kind of question is this... Are you trying to change the subject?”

“If that works in my favor, sure, you can call it that. So, tell me, will you admit it?”

“Definitely not,” she refuted. “I might have lost my memory, but I know I’m not that kind of person.”

Victoria knew that Alaric liked to tease her because of her amnesia, which was why she felt that she couldn’t have done such things.

Little did she know, what Alaric said was true.

14:19 Mon, 17 Jul

She often went to the Cadogan Residence, not because of him, but because she particularly liked Casey. But as she went there more and more, her chances of meeting Alaric increased naturally.

After that, the two of them started playing together, and she got attached to him. She would constantly go to the Cadogan Residence and look to stay by Alaric’s side.

Her attachment lasted from childhood to adulthood.

As they grew up together from a young age and Alaric often protected her, the man had always thought of himself as her older brother.

It wasn't until later when certain things had happened that he realized that his feelings for her were not platonic.

When he thought about what happened with Claudia in the

past, his gaze

dimmed considerably.

If it wasn't for her impersonating his savior back then, he might have noticed how he truly felt for Victoria right when he was in his youth. Their future probably wouldn't have been so tumultuous

[00.

And if things hadn't been so hard back then, all these things that happened later on might not have happened.

Unfortunately, what was done was done. There was no point in thinking about these things. Alaric snapped out of his thoughts and tapped Victoria's forehead.

"Fine, then. But when you regain your memory, you won't be able to deny it."

As lunchtime approached, Casey's husband, Aquilo Aspin, who was also Alaric's grandfather and the children's great-grandfather, returned home.

With two fish in his hand, he came back saying he wanted to show off his skills and treat the little

ones to a meal at noon.

Upon hearing from Casey that Victoria and Alaric had also arrived, he hurriedly ran to the house to greet them.

Aquilo was a particularly gentle person. After chatting with them for a while, he said he needed to start cooking, or it would be past lunchtime.

He then went to the kitchen.

Victoria stood by the door, watching him leave for the kitchen before Casey went with him to assist with the preparations.

Victoria could tell that this was their daily life.

“Do

you like it?” Alaric’s voice suddenly rang out beside her ear.

He continued before Victoria could react. “If you like it, we can live this kind of life when we grow old too.”

Victoria didn’t expect him to bring up their future together. After she imagined it for a bit, she asked, “Like them?”

“Like them, or however you want,” Alaric replied.

“I don’t think we can live our old age like them, though. Can you cook?”

This question caught Alaric off guard.

Seeing how quiet he got, Victoria raised her gaze and looked at him. “Why aren’t you saying anything? So, you can’t cook?”

Alaric finally replied after a moment of silence. “Just because I can’t cook now doesn’t mean I won’t be able to in the future. I’ll learn how to cook when we’re older, and it’s time for retirement. I can’t promise a grand feast, but I’m sure I can make something simple. I can definitely keep your belly

full.”

Victoria instinctively frowned at those words.

“I didn’t say that you must be the one cooking.”

“Will you do it, then?” He casually imagined the scene and immediately frowned. “No, you can’t do it. I’ll do it.”

The thought of her petite figure running around in the kitchen, her fair and delicate hands handling the cooking, washing dishes, and using a kitchen knife, was unacceptable to him.

He didn’t know what other men thought, but he couldn’t bear to see Victoria doing those things.

Meanwhile, Victoria had no idea what he was thinking. She only thought that this kind of life sounded pretty nice. She didn’t mind cooking. After all, when two people were together, someone had to cook, and the one who didn’t cook would have to do the dishes.

They could share the workload when the time came.

For lunch, they set up a large table in the yard and dined in the open air. Victoria had eaten in upscale open-air restaurants and picnicked on beaches with azure seas and blue skies, but she had never eaten in a self-built courtyard in the countryside.

Occasionally, the barking of dogs and the cheerful voices of children passing by could be heard from outside. The rural atmosphere was thick, and despite the noise, she strangely felt at peace.

For Victoria, this was a magical experience.

Alaric took good care of her by picking out the greasy and meaty food that she couldn’t eat with his fork.

Casey became a little unhappy after a few back-and-forths.

“Al, take what you want and eat it. Why do you keep stealing food from Victoria’s plate?”

Alaric smiled. "Grandma, the food on her plate tastes better to me!"

That remark left Casey speechless. Beside her, Aquilo chuckled and stated, "It's normal for young people to be playful. Let them do as they please."

Chapter 517 Do I Sound Like I'm Begging for Mercy on His Behalf?

They were in the middle of talking when Alaric's phone rang.

Upon hearing the ringtone, Mary complained, "Why did you bring your phone to the dining table? And you didn't even put it on silent."

But now that the phone was ringing, Alaric had no choice but to take it out and glance at the screen.

When he saw the caller ID, the faint smile on his lips faded away. "Excuse me. I need to take this call."

With that, he swiftly got up and left.

"Ignore him. Let's eat while he answers the call." Mary urged everyone to start with lunch.

Victoria sat still, but her heart seemed to have drifted away with Alaric. She had noticed the slight change in his expression when he saw the caller ID. It probably isn't good news.

Losing her appetite from worry, she set her fork down and informed everyone else at the table, "You all enjoy your meal. I'm going to check on him."

The others were momentarily taken aback, but they soon smiled and replied, "Sure thing. Go ahead."

Victoria returned the smile and then headed outside.

After she left the table, the people at the table couldn't help but chuckle. "Young couples nowadays can't stay away from each other, can they?"

"I agree. But it shows they have a strong bond, and that's what makes relationships last."

"That's true!" They laughed in unison.

Victoria walked with light steps toward the door. She assumed that Alaric was just outside in the courtyard taking the call, but to her surprise, she found that he had walked quite far.

From this distance, she could only see his back and couldn't hear what he was saying at all.

Realizing this, Victoria tiptoed after him.

When she got closer, she heard Alaric speaking into his phone in a cold voice.

"What should you do, huh? Didn't I already tell you? Do I need to repeat myself?"

"But Mr. Cadogan, Miss Selwyn said-

"You know that was in the past." Alaric's voice was devoid of warmth. "I've repaid what I owed him. when I didn't involve the authorities last time."

He then let out a bitter laugh. "I've given him a chance, but he still chose to hurt one of my own. There's nothing left to discuss."

Alaric absolutely wouldn't allow anyone to take Victoria away from his side or harm her.

Considering how she had returned to such a state, he couldn't imagine what would have happened if he had arrived even a little later.

Mon,

Alaric could hardly bear to think about the consequences he might have to face.

37%

Thinking about how Victoria used to have such a good appetite, but now she could only eat in small bites, and how certain foods made her nauseous or caused her discomfort, or how he didn't know when she would fully recover her health and memories...

Just

thinking about all of this suffocated Alaric. He couldn't simply let those who had hurt her off so easily.

"It's decided. Don't ask me how to handle it anymore."

With those words, Alaric didn't give any further reaction and immediately ended the call.

Victoria stood behind him. Even though there was a short distance between them, she could still sense the fluctuation of Alaric's mood and the anger emanating from him.

She watched the scene with helpless eyes and sighed inwardly.

To her surprise, Alaric turned around the next second. There was still a trace of coldness and indifference in his gaze when his black eyes met hers.

He must not have expected her to be here as he paused for a moment before reacting. The other emotions in his eyes faded away, and he approached her with a complex look in his eyes.

“I was just taking a call. Why did you come out as well?”

Instead of answering his question, she asked in return, “Is this about Bane?”

Alaric still didn't like hearing her say Bane's name even now. He only frowned in displeasure.

Seeing that he wasn't answering her, she could only ask, “Can't you tell me?”

She pursed her lips and approached him. “I only want to know how you plan to handle it. Can't you tell me even that much?”

He finally spoke after a long silence.

“What will you do after I tell you? Are you trying to stop me?” Alaric stood still, his black eyes fixated on her. He continued without waiting for her answer. “Victoria, it's useless to try and stop me. I...”

He paused for a moment at this point. He initially intended to say that there was no point in her stopping him because he would never let Bane off the hook.

However, he thought that he might be too harsh when those words were about to leave his lips. Besides upsetting her, it might also strain their relationship.

With that in mind, Alaric grew quiet mid-sentence.

The two of them looked at each other in silence. He watched Victoria without a word, and she seemed to have no intention of speaking either. Still, she didn't leave.

They stood like that for a while, and in the end, it was Alaric who couldn't hold back and approached her.

“Let's not talk about this anymore. Didn't we agree on leaving it to me to handle? I will take care of it. All you need to do is rest without worrying about anything.”

After saying that, he pulled her close by the shoulders. “Let's go back in.”

Victoria finally uttered a question then.

“Is it because I have amnesia?”

Alaric stopped in his tracks. “What?”

“Are you angry because he caused

my amnesia?"

He lowered his gaze, and when he saw her scrutinizing him, he smirked at the sight of her uneasy expression and scoffed. "What else? Should I be happy that he turned my woman like this?"

Victoria pursed her lips when she noticed that he seemed to be losing control of his emotions.

"That's not what I meant."

H

"I know that, but Victoria, I don't like hearing you mention him, and I especially don't like you begging for mercy on his behalf."

Alaric felt that he had been patient enough, but he was still worried he would frighten her. He would have let his anger show the moment she mentioned Bane otherwise.

"Do you think I'm pleading for him?" Victoria asked in return. "I'm asking you why you're angry."

Upon hearing this, Alaric pondered for a moment and realized that she was right. It eased his heart a little, but he still felt displeased when she brought up Bane.

"Hmm."

Victoria sighed. "The amnesia shouldn't be his fault, even though I'm not entirely sure. But he has been taking care of me since I woke up."

Upon hearing her words, Alaric frowned and growled, "What did you say?"

"What I mean is, the amnesia must have been an accident."

Even though Victoria didn't like Bane, she could sense that he had no ill intentions toward her.

She also knew that Alaric was only acting in a normal way since he hated Bane. Then again, she wasn't Alaric, and she couldn't put herself in his shoes.

It was just like how Alaric couldn't put himself in her shoes.

"If the amnesia is an accident, then what about your lack of appetite? The doctor told me you're malnourished."

She kept her lips pressed together for a long second before saying, "You might think I'm making excuses for him if I tell you."

This statement already gave Alaric an idea of what she would say next.

He didn't respond, but his gaze weighed heavily on her.

Chapter 518 Will Give Him a Proper Thank You

"Let's go

inside if you don't want to listen," Victoria uttered, having been stared at by Alaric for a while. In the end, she turned around and started to leave.

At that moment, Alaric grabbed her hand.

"Never mind. Say it if you want to." He eventually conceded. He had decided to listen to her.

Although he really didn't want to hear it, he knew that Victoria wouldn't have come out with him when he received the call if it was something she didn't want to say.

She furrowed her eyebrows slightly. "I don't have to say it if you don't want to hear it."

As soon as she finished speaking, Alaric held her hand tightly. "Alright, alright. If you want to say say it. I'll try not to get angry. Is that okay?"

Hearing this, Victoria slowly blinked without answering him.

Seeing her stare at him without a word, Alaric could only raise his hand and pinch her cheek.

"Hurry up and say it. I want to know what you mean when you say that I'll think you're making excuses for him."

1. it.

His actions and words made Victoria's heart go soft a little. He was clearly angry and didn't want to hear it, but because she wanted to tell him, he had to patiently listen and even coax her into talking.

Thinking about how much he cared for her, she couldn't help but reach out and wrap her arms around his waist.

Alaric, who didn't understand what she was doing, was taken aback. Before he could react, she threw herself at him, burying herself in his embrace.

Having the woman he loved suddenly hug him made his cold heart melt in that instant while he froze in place.

Buried in his chest, Victoria began explaining, "These things I'm about to say aren't excuses for him. I just want to tell you the truth, and what you decide to do after knowing it is up to you. I won't interfere. He has been taking care of me since I lost my memory. Of course, I know you'll say that I wouldn't have lost my memory if it weren't for him threatening me to go there. His taking care of me is a cause-and-effect thing. For now, let's just blame the amnesia on him, but my malnutrition is my fault."

Victoria didn't want to say it at first, but after waking up and seriously contemplating it, and since Alaric immediately noticed it when she was eating, there was no point in her hiding it anymore.

"I lost the will to live after they sent you away."

Alaric's heart had softened when Victoria threw herself into his arms, but upon hearing her words, the warmth dissipated instantly, and his sharp eyes narrowed dangerously.

"What did you say?" Instinctively, he grabbed her arm tightly. "Lost the will to live? What do you mean? What did he do to you?"

Victoria was startled by the intensity of his reaction.

14/20 Mon

Seeing how he looked like a cornered animal, she reassured him, "Don't get worked up. I'll tell you the whole story, okay?"

It was probably because he came to some other conclusion or that her voice was comforting that he started to calm down.

"I didn't lose my will because he did something to me. It's because I thought that I had completed my mission when you left. But I didn't want to stay by his side, even though I subconsciously didn't want to hurt him. My emotions became conflicted. It wasn't something I intended; it was an unconscious result of my emotions. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

Alaric clenched his teeth tightly. Of course, he understood. How could he not?

In other words, something might have happened to her if he had awakened a little later or arrived a little later to find her.

The possibility made Alaric shudder in fear while cold sweat broke out on his back.

Victoria saw his face turn pale, and she could probably guess what he was thinking. And so, she explained, "I know what you're thinking. Don't blame yourself. Even if you had come a little later, nothing would have happened to me."

Clearly not believing her words, he remained silent.

"It's true. Mr. Hudson was the one who helped me." Victoria couldn't help but smile when she mentioned him. She continued in a soft voice, "I felt hopeless and automatically resisted eating back then. Mr. Hudson found me and told me about the two children."

Alaric came to a pause at those words.

He hadn't expected to hear about Ethan from Victoria again. The last time he heard it was when Ethan helped her escape, but he didn't expect him to help her this

time as well.

It was no wonder she asked about the two people's well-being when she first came home. She even searched for her name and photos and also knew about the children despite having amnesia.

Things started to connect in Alaric's mind. "Mr. Hudson told you about my situation as well?" he asked.

"Yes, and about your injuries and your safety. He confirmed

Venuhing and informed me."

Mr. Hudson has truly helped both Victoria and me, Alaric thought. If it wasn't for him, we would have...

"Alright, I understand. After we resolve this situation, I will thank him properly."

Thank him, huh? Victoria felt that Ethan might not be that kind of person, but he had done her such a huge favor after all. It was only right to thank him properly afterward.

"The reason I wanted to tell you all this is to make it clear that he didn't hurt me."

"Right, he didn't harm you directly." Alaric's gaze remained heavy as he muttered, "But the harm you endured was indirectly caused by him."

As he said that, he realized something. "Of course, I'm at fault as well."

As he said that, he realized something. "Of course, I'm at fault as well."

He blamed himself for being too soft-hearted and indecisive when he tried to repay a favor for her. Who would have known...

At this point, he considered the favor repaid.

Meanwhile, Victoria had nothing to say.

”

“Anyway, I’ve told you the truth. It’s up to you how you want to handle it.”

Victoria had become much more open-minded after she narrowly escaped the gates of death. She had done everything she could. As for what would happen next, she had no control over it. Her life had almost been lost, and she had almost missed the chance to see her two precious children.

Alaric didn’t say anything else as he looked at her.

After a brief silence from the both of them, Mary could be heard calling out to them from inside the house.

“Alaric, why are you taking so much time on the phone call? Everyone’s going to finish all the food if you don’t come back!”

This was her gentle reminder for her son to hurry up.

“Alright.” Alaric pulled Victoria’s collar up and tidied her hair. “Let’s head back in.”

She raised her head and took a glance at him before quietly nodding.

They had just gotten to the door when the two children pounced on them.

“Daddy, Mommy, you were outside for so long!”

Victoria reached out and patted their heads. “We’re back now, aren’t we?”

“Nicole and Nathan would have gobbled everything up if you didn’t come back soon.”

Casey also waved at them.

“The food’s going to get cold soon.”

Once the couple was seated, Casey couldn’t help but reprimand Alaric. “Go out by yourself the next time you receive a call. Don’t drag Victoria along. She already isn’t eating much. She will only eat even less when the food gets cold and tastes bad.”

EVIC

14:20 Mon, 17 Jul

Chapter 519 Not Worth It

It was true that Victoria didn’t feel like eating, but it wasn’t because of the cold food since she didn’t have much of an appetite anyway. Besides, Casey had added plenty of foo

d to her plate before this. While 80 percent of it had been eaten by Alaric, there was so much food that she couldn't eat anymore after eating the remaining 20 percent.

She wondered if she needed to find an excuse to leave in case she felt sick and threw up in front of everyone. Watching her weight was a good enough excuse, right?

Alaric seemed to have known what she was thinking since he suddenly caught her hand. "Grandpa, Grandma, and Mom, Victoria and I seemed to have spotted a restaurant at the entrance of the village which looked quite appealing, so we decided not to eat too much at dinner and head there to try out the food instead."

She froze, not expecting him to think of such an idea.

"Is the restaurant owned by Jack Brown? The food isn't bad, so it's no surprise that you will be drawn to it."

it."

"Really?" Alaric smiled. "Since Grandpa approves of it, then we really have to go try

However, Casey didn't look happy. "Just have a proper dinner here at home. Why do you have to eat outside food?"

Her main concern was that the food in the shop wouldn't be as hygienic as that prepared at home, no matter how delicious it was. They didn't know the cooks well and whether the cooks would touch the ingredients without washing their hands. Who knew if both fresh and spoiled ingredients had been mixed together during meal preparation for the customers? It might taste delicious after being served, but how could anyone eat without worry when they couldn't see the cooking process?

That had been the reason why Casey had refused to go out for meals in her youth, even when dating her husband. Aquilo had been so troubled by this because other couples would go out on walks or for meals to develop their relationship, yet she refused to eat anything. He had even assumed that she didn't like him at all before discovering that it wasn't the case. She was merely fussy about hygiene and couldn't stand outside food.

After knowing this, he made a point of learning to cook. He would either bring desserts or drinks. He had made whenever they were on dates occasionally. He would also invite her to his home to taste the meals he had prepared. That was how he knew what she was thinking when she reprimanded them. She was worried that the food outside wasn't hygienic and that both Alaric and Victoria might get sick after eating it.

As Casey's husband, Aquilo could only mutter to her, "Alright, alright. Not everyone is as fastidious about cleanliness as you are. Let them try it out since they have never experienced it before."

However, Casey didn't agree. "Why wouldn't they have experienced it? There are far more restaurants in the city than here."

Victoria knew that Alaric was merely helping her resolve the situation and so acquiesced, not expecting Casey to have such a strong objection toward them going out for a meal. She immediately spoke up, feeling awkward and refusing to destroy the atmosphere. "Grandma's right. The food outside isn't hygienic, so we shouldn't go."

Below the table, she immediately tugged on Alaric's sleeve, signaling for him to agree. He remained quiet while pursing his lips, looking as if considering what to do next.

The atmosphere had become tense from the moment Casey objected to them going out. She immediately sensed that Alaric might not have wanted to take Victoria out for a meal but wanted to have some time alone with her outside. However, Casey might have spoiled their plans, so she tried to find something to make up for it.

"There's a reason I didn't let you go there too. While passing the restaurant by chance, I saw him clean up the guests' leftovers and immediately helped clean his grandson's bottom, but he didn't wash his hands properly before going off to prepare the food again. It's far too disgusting to be mentioned at the dining table, though. It's not that I'm refusing to let you eat there, but... why don't you two go for a walk instead? If you really want to try the food there, I'll ask your grandfather to prepare it for you so you can eat it after returning from your walk."

Anyone could see that Casey was trying to redeem herself for her attitude while also relieving the atmosphere, but Victoria decided to allow her some courtesy. "Okay. We're lucky that you've told us about this, or we would have gotten sick, which isn't worth it."

Victoria pulled at Alaric's sleeve again below the table, and he slowly lifted his head to nod. "Yes, Victoria's right. Thanks, Grandma."

"We'll go for a walk then. The air in the fields must smell fresh in the evenings."

When Alaric and Victoria got up, Nicole wanted to follow them as well, but Casey pulled her back. "Why don't you two come help me later?"

The two children blinked before nodding.

Alaric and Victoria left the compound after that. The sky had darkened within a short time, and every house they passed had turned on the lights. Eventually, she asked Alaric awkwardly, "Why did you behave like that just now?"

"How?" Alaric replied naturally, sounding as if he didn't see anything wrong with his behavior at the dining table.

"Rudely. Grandma is older than us, so you shouldn't have remained silent."

He laughed lightly. "So, remaining silent is equivalent to being rude? Haven't you spoken up for me?"

"I was speaking up for myself. You should have said something too."

He paused in his stride and looked down at her, studying her carefully.

Victoria became anxious under his scrutiny. "What is it?"

"I noticed that you like to reprimand others after you've lost your memory."

She couldn't help blinking at him. After a slight pause, she mumbled, "I like to reprimand others?"

She hadn't felt that she was reprimanding him just now.

"When have I done that to you?" She frowned at him. "I merely thought that your way of dealing with the situation wasn't suitable and so gave you a suggestion. Why are you acting like this and

Seeing that Victoria was about to get angry, Alaric quickly caught her pale wrist. "Why are you angry?"

"I'm not angry."

"Why do you deny it? You're pouting so hard."

"I'm not-"

•

"Fine, fine. I'm willing to listen either way." He cut her off quickly and pulled her hand toward his mouth to kiss it gently.

She had wanted to lose her temper, but her fury faded away instantly after that. "You-"

"Okay, okay. Even if I have been rude, it was because I didn't want you to remain there. Are you sure that you can eat anything now?"

She shook her head.

"That's alright, then. I'd rather behave rudely than risk you getting sick afterward."

Chapter 520 Can You Offer Something Else

That meant that Alaric was doing it for himself.

"Is it that I don't know anything?"

“No.” He had enough will to live that he immediately denied it. “I’m concerned about you , and you’re concerned about me. We’re concerned for each other, so how does that count as you not knowing anything? Do you think I know nothing?”

Victoria shook her head. “How would I ever think that? I’m just worried that you may give your grandparents a bad impression or infuriate them. They’re old, after all.”

“Yeah, you’re right. I’ll take note of it from now on.”

Alaric admitted to his mistake just in time and knew how to make her happy, so whatever rage she had gotten quickly faded away. “At least you know now.”

He laughed under his breath and led her forward once more.

“Did we ever walk together like this?”

Her question made him ponder for a while, and she looked at him when he remained silent for too long. “We’ve never gone out on walks though we’ve been together for so long?”

Victoria had assumed that married couples would have taken walks together at the very least.

“We did,” Alaric suddenly replied. “However, it was a long time ago, probably when we were still kids.”

She had followed him around all the time back then, so it might count strictly as walking together.

“Kids?” Victoria didn’t desire much of her past memories but became interested when he mentioned events that had happened before.

“Yeah.”

“What else happened when we were kids? Can you tell me?”

He glanced at her. “Of course.”

They walked on the silent village road as Alaric told Victoria about everything that had happened back then while she listened quietly and replied briefly on occasion.

It was some time before he stopped walking for a moment, and she asked, “What is it?”

He remained silent before saying, “Nothing.”

She could hear that he sounded controlled as if he was suppressing something. She was confused about it at first and tried to guess the reason, but soon she recalled something she had put at the back of her mind since arriving here. Alaric was still injured.

Victoria stopped abruptly and felt irritated at the fact that she had forgotten something so important. He had focused on her so entirely that he had noticed her bad appetite, which meant he was extremely concerned about her. However, he had forgotten all about his injuries.

14:21 Mon, 17

"Hang on." She stopped him. "Let's go back."

"Why?" He glanced sideways at her. "We have only been out here for a short while, and Grandma may ask you to eat something if we go back now. Why don't we go back a bit later? They might be asleep by then."

The elderly couple had moved to the country to retire since they couldn't get used to the quick pace of the city as well as its vibrant nightlife. Someone might be singing loudly next door when they were both asleep; after all, youths had endless energy and could stay up until the early hours of the morning.

They hadn't been able to withstand it due to their age, so they eventually moved to the countryside after some discussion. Their bedtime was thus very early, and they were usually already asleep before 9.00PM. That meant that if Alaric and Victoria returned after that, they didn't have to see his grandparents.

However, Victoria was reluctant. "No way. Let's go back now. It's not so far from here anyway."

Alaric frowned slightly. "Why don't you worry about yourself?"

She didn't think much before saying, "Compared to that, I'm more worried about you."

He paused before asking, "What did you say?"

"I'm sorry." She looked at him apologetically. "I've forgotten all about your injury after coming

here."

She had only remembered her children's matters and forgotten about him. She would have been hurt had she been in his position.

Alaric sighed in resignation when he knew she was apologizing for that. "That's all? I thought it was something serious."

She frowned at his attitude. "Your injury is pretty bad. How can it not be serious? Let's go back now. You may need to reapply the medication for your injury."

She recalled something else and asked again, "Speaking of, did you bring the medication?"

He didn't want her to be so concerned and fearful for him after seeing the way her worry was nearly overflowing from her eyes. "I did. It's in my luggage, and I'll do it myself when we get back later."

"Can you manage it?" He didn't think that she would refuse to let this go. "Let's go back now, and I'll help you reapply your medication."

He pursed his lips and fell silent.

Victoria looked up at him when he stayed quiet and saw how resigned he looked. "You're here, anyway. If I get anything that I don't like to eat, I'll just stuff it into your mouth, alright?"

He remained silent, prompting her to soften her tone. "Okay, okay. I want to eat something too. I'm so thin, so I have to eat a little more, right? Don't worry, though. I will control the amount I eat. I won't force myself if I can't eat anymore."

She knew that Alaric didn't want to go back early because he was concerned she might force herself into eating in front of his grandparents.

Sure enough, he was somewhat persuaded after she consoled him, though he remained where he was while looking unwilling.

"What? Is that not enough?"

He laughed suddenly. "It's enough, but can you offer something else other than your reassurances?"

She looked at him in puzzlement. "S—Something else?"

Just as she finished speaking, Alaric put his arms around her waist. He pulled hard enough that she fell forward uncontrollably and straight into his embrace. Instantly, she was surrounded by his

scent.

"Next time, try persuading me using your actions, alright?"

He bent down so their foreheads were touching and their breaths mingled. His closeness made Victoria so anxious that her eyelashes fluttered. Even if she didn't mind his closeness,

eness, it was the second time it had happened today, which made it somewhat hard for her to take it.

“I-

” She instinctively reached out and pushed against his chest. However, she was worried that she might touch his injury after making contact. She shifted slightly, pressing on another spot.

Alaric was speechless by her actions and knew that she was concerned for him after seeing that she was still attentive toward his injury even now. He didn't want to tease her any longer after that and eventually controlled himself. Kissing her forehead, he murmured, “Let's go back.”