

Departure with a Belly Chapter 581

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Chapter 581 All Men of the Cadogans Love Their Wives Dearly

“It’s fine. We also enjoy having simple meals now. Unlike in the past, we are more health conscious now that age is catching up with us fast,” Mary said when she saw the food served on the table.

Sure enough, her words took Tony, who was initially worried that she and Adrian wouldn’t be accustomed to having simple dishes, by surprise.

Truthfully, Mary had always sought to maintain her beauty. So, she had always had strict control over the food she ate. She wouldn’t eat anything with high sugar content or had too many calories. Her meals were clean, healthy, and organic. That was why she could stay so fit, and her skin remained so fair over the years.

Only after personally looking after Nicole and Nathan recently that she neglected her vigorous beauty regime. Due to her overflowing love for her two grandchildren, Mary always overfed Nicole and Nathan during meals,

hoping they would grow up healthily.

Still, little did Mary know, Nicole and Nathan actually upheld the principle Victoria taught them for years—only take the amount of food you could eat and don’t waste food. Moreover, Victoria had always lived by the idea of rather eating less than eating more.

Nonetheless, the amount of food Mary fed Nicole and Nathan was beyond their stomach capacity. Hence, when the two eventually couldn’t finish their food, Mary would smile and say, “It’s okay. I got this. I promise you; no food will go to waste, for I will finish them for you.”

After that, the immensely self-disciplined and beautiful Mary from the past gladly finished their leftovers. Be it calorie counting or sugar content that was off the chart, none mattered to her. For that reason, Mary stopped being picky about what she ate, as long as it was the food Nicole and Nathan enjoyed.

Meanwhile, Victoria watched as Mary took better care of Nicole and Nathan than her. To Victoria, she wouldn't be able to constantly pay such close attention to Nicole and Nathan's activities as Mary. Even though personality-wise, Mom probably won't say anything if I want to live outside with Nicky and Nate as she will undoubtedly come to visit them based on how attached she is to them. However, whether she will stick around and not leave upon her visit is still something I have yet to be sure of. Then again, judging from her current and past behavior, the probability of her staying and not leaving is extremely high. In that case, I can totally discard any thoughts of moving out.

As for Adrian, he was delighted that Mary was willing to eat without worrying about calories. In the past, he constantly felt that she ate too little in order to stay fit. Because of that, he often worried that she would suffer from malnutrition.

Fortunately, Mary had a nutritionist who regularly planned her meal intake and often supplemented her nutrition from other aspects. Even so, Adrian always felt those supplements Mary ate weren't as nourishing as a proper meal.

Therefore, now that Adrian saw Mary was willing to eat without harping on about her calorie intake, he also happily added more food for Nicole and Nathan. Either way, she would eat the leftovers if the two little fellows couldn't finish them.

Nicole looked at the food that was piled as high as a hill in front of her and turned to Adrian and complained, looking pitiful, "Grandpa, it's too much... I can't finish them."

Adrian simply smiled and said, "It's okay. Take your time and enjoy the food. Don't worry. Grandma will help you eat the food if you can't finish it."

After that, he even winked at Nicole. However, Nicole merely looked at him, not fully understanding what he said.

On the contrary, Nathan, who was beside her, got Adrian's point. Grandpa has been acting this way the last few times. It seems that he wants Grandma to have more food through the two of us. Adults are so weird. Why can't Grandpa simply tell Grandma if he wants her to eat more? Or, he can just put the food on Grandma's plate by himself. Yet, why does Grandpa have to go through all this fuss?

Still, regardless of how he found the situation strange, Nathan remained silent and didn't immediately expose Adrian. After all, from his point of view, he wasn't part of the world of grown-ups.

Unfortunately, Mary seemed to have seen through Adrian's scheme at this moment.

After Adrian finished saying that to Nicole, Mary couldn't help squinting her eyes at him and stared at him with a looming gaze. Adrian naturally sensed her gaze as he awkwardly touched his nose and asked in a low voice, "What's wrong?"

Perhaps, Adrian would have wished he didn't ask Mary, for the words that escaped her lips the next moment, took him by surprise. "Later, you will have Nicole and Nathan's leftovers if they can't finish their food."

Adrian said nothing.

"Did you hear me?" Mary demanded hotly.

He scratched his nose as he nodded dully and hummed, "Yes."

When Mary received Adrian's agreement, only then did she look away in satisfaction.

Thus, Adrian, who originally planned to continue eating more food, had no choice but to slow down after hearing Mary's words. The amount of food on my plate is already my regular food intake. There's no doubt that I will exceed my usual consumption intake if I have to finish Nicole and Nathan's leftovers. I have to take my

time and nibble these foods slowly. Otherwise, I certainly will have no appetite for dinner

Victoria and Alaric, who were on the side, simply watched Adrian and Mary behaving like frenemies.

Victoria leaned closer to Alaric and asked softly upon taking in such an intriguing scene, "Is Dad always like this

in front of Mom?"

Alaric raised his eyebrows when he heard

Victoria's question. "Are you referring to the fact that he is submissive

in front of Mom?"

"Yeah, something like that."

"Oh, that's normal in the Cadogan household."

"Huh?"

The corner of Alaric's lips curled upward into a smirk as Alaric explained in a low yet flirtatious voice, "What I meant to say was that this is the trait of all the males in the Cadogan Family. They love their wives dearly, so those who are married will obey their wives in everything."

Victoria said nothing and merely cast him a shocked yet speechless look after hearing Alaric's little backstory of the Cadogan Family. I know Alaric knows no shame. Yet, I never expected him to be so shameless that he can actually praise himself even when he is talking about Mom and Dad.

Perhaps the shock in her gaze was too obvious as Alaric couldn't help but think that she looked utterly

adorable. Therefore, he

couldn't help reaching out and tapping her nose. "Why are you looking at me like that?

Am I wrong?"

"No." Victoria shook her head and retracted her gaze. "I just didn't expect you to be so confident."

Alaric's smile deepened as he said. "You know, that's not my only strong point. No worries. You will gradually learn more of my good traits in the future."

As for Tony, who sat in his seat, his heart was overwhelmed with emotions for a moment as he watched the interaction between Victoria and Alaric. Judging from how things are going on between these two, it seems that Victoria and Alaric are getting along pretty well. Moreover, Victoria is my daughter, whom I cherished dearly since she was a child. So, I know what's going on in her mind. She can't fool me. She has always treated Alaric differently since she was young. She was the only one who thought that no one noticed her very visible favoritism. Yet, never once did it cross my mind that so many unpleasant things would happen later. As expected, life has never been one smooth sailing journey.

Tony grabbed the glass

of milk on the side and gulped down at that thought. Only after he drank it did he

realize it was a glass

of milk. He couldn't help but look at the glass in confusion. He stared at it in silence for a long time before realizing that they were currently having breakfast. I'm such a muddlehead. The evening has yet

to arrive. Yet, there I was thinking I was holding a glass of wine just now. That was why I picked it up and drank it without giving it any thought.

As soon as this crossed Tony's mind, he whispered to

Sasha, who sat beside him. "Prepare a few bottles of wine

for lunch later. I'm going to have a few drinks with them."

Sasha instinctively frowned and didn't comply immediately upon hearing his request. "Have you forgotten how you suffered from an upset stomach? You should cut down on drinking."

Chapter 582 Take Them Back

"I know. I remember everything the doctor said, but it's the New Year. Everyone is having a good time, so I thought we should have a glass or two of alcohol to boost the festivities." After that, Tony looked at Adrian and asked, "What do you say? Shall we have some wine around noon?"

"Sure, why not? Besides, I haven't had a drink for a long time." Adrian nodded, agreeing with Tony's proposal. Alas, as soon as these words escaped his lips, he sensed a sharp glance from the side. So, he immediately touched his nose awkwardly.

At the same time, Sasha added, "I think it's better we brew some tea at noon. You can substitute tea for wine. Plus, not only is tea a healthier option compared to alcohol, but it will also make you feel good. How does that sound?"

Tony and Adrian were reduced to silence now that their wives had prohibited them from drinking and suggested substituting tea for wine, respectively. Hence, in order to preserve family harmony and their good relationship with their wives, the two had no choice but to go along with Sasha's suggestion.

As a result, the two elderly men sat together and leisurely enjoyed their tea at noon. Tony's sense of engagement was high, considering he brewed the tea himself.

Tony was still disappointed he couldn't have some wine when he was forced to brew the tea. Nonetheless, his disappointment gradually dissipated as he enjoyed his tea and chatted with Adrian about various topics related to Nicole and Nathan. Sasha is right, after all. It feels pretty nice even if we're drinking tea instead of wine.

While the others had all gone out for some grocery shopping at the nearby grocery store, only Tony and Adrian were left in the house, except for the servants.

At first, Mary didn't allow Alaric to join them, saying that it was fine for the women to shop by themselves. However, Alaric retorted, "Why don't you let me tag along? Don't you need someone to help carry the grocery bags later?"

Mary

cocked her head at her son upon hearing that. "Oh, wow. My son, who is constantly occupied with important affairs, is actually offering to help us carry the grocery bags?!"

"Mom, don't joke." Alaric smiled slightly and continued, "I am offering to help you carry them today, am I not?"

you

Mary clicked her tongue before whispering to Victoria, "He is only this solicitous when he's around you. To tell

the truth, he

never went shopping with me before. I remembered those times when I thought of taking him to go shopping with me after getting so envious of other moms. I always had to watch on as their sons helped them carry their shopping bags in the past. To my dismay, he actually rejected me."

Victoria blinked slightly upon hearing that. "Is that so? Mom, since he is willing to obey me in everything, you can let me know if you need someone to help you carry your bags next time. I will ask him to go with you."

"No problem. As expected, you always side with me." After that, Mary glanced at Alaric triumphantly, leaving him speechless. Suddenly, a realization hit Mary after she finished teasing Alaric. Oh my! Sasha is right next to us, yet I can't believe the three of us ignored her while we were chatting just now!

Even though Sasha was Victoria's stepmother, Mary bore no animosity toward her. On the contrary, Mary admired Sasha's personality and thought she was easy to get along with.

In addition, Mary was an attentive and sensitive woman. Hence, she hurriedly shifted her attention to Sasha after swiftly realizing that her interacting with Victoria and Alaric without including Sasha would put Sasha in an awkward situation.

"I was just playing around with them." As Mary and Sasha carried Nicole and Nathan in their arms, respectively, Mary said, "Come. Let's go to the front and give these two some privacy."

Sasha merely smiled before nodding and leaving with Mary.

Since Victoria preferred to carefully browse the ingredient list and manufacturing date of the items she would buy, she generally chose those that were new on the shelves with a list of fresh ingredients. For that reason, she was still picking out the items on the shelves when Sasha and Mary left. In fact, she was so focused that she only realized Alaric was the only one left with her after she finished choosing a few items. Victoria was slightly stunned. Therefore, she inquired, "Where have they gone?"

Alaric folded his arms across his chest as he leaned on the side, looked at her leisurely, and replied, "As you can see, they are all gone. I suppose they want to give us some privacy. Or perhaps, they fear you will steal Nicole and Nathan from them."

Alaric's reply made Victoria feel a little speechless.

"Steal them? Do you honestly think I can? I don't even think I can go near Nicky and Nate when Mom and Sasha are around." Be it day or night, Mom has been occupying Nicky and Nate's time. Perhaps for other mothers, it is blissful that they don't have to look after their children, around the clock. I mean—who wouldn't, right? After all, life is like heaven when you can be as free as before giving birth and not having to look after the kids. Not me, though. Maybe the reason I truly want to raise Nicky and Nate solely on my own has something to do with my amnesia. Still, I think I would have been a full-time housewife if my subconsciousness hadn't reminded me that I couldn't afford to be one. Otherwise, I would have no support in raising two kids if something happened. It's precisely because of this thought that I constantly prohibit myself from dreaming of becoming a full-time housewife. Otherwise, I would have actually quit my job and only focus on looking after Nicky and Nate.

"My, such jealousy in your tone." Alaric looked at her amusedly and said jokingly. "Why don't I go and take Nicole and Nathan back for you?"

Victoria glared at him upon hearing that and asked, "Really?"

"Yeah." Alaric's expression was nothing but serious. "I'll go as long as you ask me to."

Victoria stared at Alaric doubtfully. Somehow, she felt that he said these words just to tease her on purpose. He wouldn't really go and take Nicky and Nate back even if I asked him to, would he? After all, they are with Mom and Sasha, not with strangers. Still, the more he tries to pretend, the more I want to expose him. It was precisely with this thought in mind that she said, "Fine, then. Take the children back now."

"Sure." Alaric headed straight in one specific direction without any hesitation while Victoria stood still and silently watched him leave.

Victoria waited as she thought Alaric would return after taking a few steps. I ought to see how he is going to explain himself by then. To her surprise, Alaric didn't return even after his silhouette disappeared before her eyes. Hence, she stood on the spot and blinked as she couldn't help but feel that he was behaving rather oddly. He isn't really going to take Nicky and Nate back, is he? No way, right?

Once she contemplated the chances, she simply couldn't find it in herself to be bothered to look in the direction Alaric walked off and continued picking out the items she needed. She intended to wait for him to

return.

After some time she heard footsteps. When Victoria looked up, she was surprised by the sight before her.

Alaric walked toward her with Nicole and Nathan in each arm. As the two little fellows feared they would fall from his embrace, they stretched out their hands and held onto Alaric's neck. In reality, the two children were a grown up. Thus, carrying them should be a strenuous task. Yet, Alaric carried them in his arms so effortlessly as if they weighed nothing.

Still, Victoria was astonished when she saw Alaric coming over with Nicole and Nathan in his arms. Once she saw Mary and Sasha following behind him with puzzled expressions, she was so speechless that she even forgot to check the ingredient list of the items she wanted to buy and simply placed them straight into the car. What the hell is Alaric thinking? I thought he was joking! I didn't expect that he would take Nicky and Nate away from Mom and Sasha. Also, what did he tell them when he took Nicky and Nate from them? Did he tell them he took the children back for me? Or, was it some other excuse?

As she was overwhelmed with embarrassment, she was already thinking about running away and the closest escape route before Alaric, Nicole, and Nathan approached her.

"I'm back." In contrast to Victoria's abashed state, Alaric walked up to her expressionlessly and placed Nicole

and Nathan in the shopping cart.

100 Bonus

Chapter 583 Sharing Weal and Woe

"Mommy!" As soon as Nicole and Nathan saw Victoria, they swiftly dashed to her, vying to cling to her and hug her. Such enthusiasm startled Victoria. Still, there was a smile on her face as she returned Nicole and Nathan's

hugs in surprise and delight.

Soon, a realization hit her, making her look up at Alaric. When she noticed that Mary and Sasha had yet to approach them, she took the chance and questioned him under her breath. "I thought you were joking just now! I can't believe you actually snatched Nicky and Nate from Mom and Sasha!"

Alas, Alaric

simply looked at her with a serious expression and said, "I never said I was joking."

His response rendered Victoria speechless. Aren't people usually just joking about these things under such circumstances? I mean, who would actually snatch their children from their relatives like that? They're not child

traffickers. Geez!

"What's wrong? Did you think I was joking?"

Victoria felt the corner of her mouth twitch. She initially wanted to say something in retort. However, she had no choice but to bite back the words that she was about to say as she smiled when she saw Mary and Sasha

had come up to them.

As for Mary and Sasha, both had awkward expressions after greeting Victoria.

Once they came closer, Mary reached out, pinched Alaric's arm, and questioned sharply, "Everything was fine, so why did you suddenly show up and snatch Nicole and Nathan?"

Thanks to Mary, Victoria felt less embarrassed. It seems that Alaric had simply taken Nicky and Nate back without giving them a reason. Thank God! That, at least, won't make me end up in a difficult situation. Unfortunately, Victoria soon began to worry again. Seeing as how Mom and Sasha chased after Alaric and interrogated him, I have a feeling that he just took Nicky and Nate away and left without saying anything at all.

Now that we have nowhere to run, does that mean he has no choice but to answer them? What if he told them

the real reason here in front of me?

"Oh, it's because-"

Before Alaric could finish his sentence, Victoria abruptly interrupted him, "I suddenly miss Nicky and Nate.

That's why I have asked Alaric to bring them here. Mom, it's absolutely none of Alaric's business."

As soon as these words escaped her lips, the three paused simultaneously, especially Alaric. He was the first to

look in Victoria's direction after snapping back to his senses prior to being momentarily stunned. Then, he curled his lips into a slight smile and looked at her with a tinge of resignation. Making concessions in order to gain advantages, I see... Such a brilliant move.

Sure enough, Mary instantly realized something after hearing what Victoria said. So, she narrowed her eyes and shot Alaric a harsh glare.

"Are

you for real, Al? As a man, not only did you go nuts and snatch my grandchildren away from me without warning, but you also let your wife bear the blame for you?"

When faced with Mary's accusation, Alaric swept his gaze at the strained smile on Victoria's face and had no choice before replying lazily, "I'm not. What can I say? She felt sorry for me, so she spoke up for me. What's wrong with that?"

"What's wrong with that? How dare you ask me that question? If you were a man, you would solve this conflict before your wife came to your defense!"

Alaric remained utterly nonchalant and unrepentant as he said nothing in the face of Mary's harsh words.

Mary questioned him once more, "Did you even hear what I have just said to you?"

Only then did Alaric answer helplessly, "Yes, I heard you, but Nicole and Nathan are my children. You can't deny that I am dissatisfied with you constantly carrying them in your arms without giving me even the slightest chance to spend some father-and-child time with them."

I am aware that Alaric is saying these words to his mother, but Sasha is standing on the side. I can't believe he is being so straightforward. At that thought, Victoria dragged Alaric over embarrassedly and said with a smile, "He's just joking. Sasha, Mom, please don't take it to heart."

Meanwhile, Alaric glanced at her but didn't answer. His actions were akin to a tacit agreement with what she

said.

Instead, Sasha turned around and smiled at Mary. "Why don't we go upstairs for a stroll and let them spend some alone time together for a while? I know a jewelry store that sells particularly fancy jewelry pieces with

unique designs."

Even though Mary was reluctant to part with her grandchildren, she still took what Alaric said seriously. Indeed, I have been occupying all of Nicole and Nathan's time during the day and when they go off to bed. I've been treating them as though they are my son and daughter.

Prior to today, Mary didn't think that there was anything wrong with hogging her grandchildren's time because

she simply wanted to take care of Nicole and Nathan..

Now that Alaric brought up this matter, Mary realized she had indeed been spending a lot of time with Nicole and Nathan. As a result, the two little fellows had no time to bond with their parents. Then, Mary put herself in Victoria's shoes. If the same situation had occurred to me when I gave birth to Alaric last time, I would certainly have disallowed others to take him away from me. Once Mary did so, she also felt that she had truly gone overboard in the past two days. So, she said yes to Sasha's proposal.

"Sure. It's been a while since I last bought a piece of jewelry too. Let's go and have a look." Thus, the two left together without a backward glance, leaving only the four in the aisle. When Victoria lowered her head to check on Nicole and Nathan, their gazes remained locked on her as they clutched her clothes tightly, looking as though they missed her dearly.

Such a scene brought immense warmth to Victoria's heart. It seems that Nicky and Nate miss me as much as I

miss them.

Victoria reached out and placed both her hands on Nicole and Nathan's heads before ruffling their hair gently. Finally, a chance for us to spend time together!

At this moment, Alaric leaned over and muttered, "What do you think? Are you pleased with the outcome?"

Victoria was a rather open book in front of her children. So, when she heard him ask her these questions, she remembered the awkward situation earlier and couldn't help but complain, "Can you refrain from behaving so rudely with the elders from now on?"

However, Alaric disagreed with her.

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"I'm afraid Mom wouldn't get my point if I'm not blunt."

"Well... I think she will get it if you can just explain to her nicely."

“Nah, these two aren’t related. Mom is the one engrossed in the joy of looking after her grandchildren, so she may not take my words seriously if I don’t tell her so straightforwardly.”

Victoria stared at him, utterly speechless. She actually found herself in a position where she was unable to refute Alaric. He does have a point. Indeed, Mom was so occupied with raising Nicky and Nate during this period that she even changed her entire lifestyle to suit the children’s needs.

“Furthermore, you seem pretty good at playing things by your ears. Either way, I am the one suffering from shame in the end.” There was a slight grievance in Alaric’s eyes as he said that. It was as if he was blaming her for selling him out without having a second thought.

If truth be told, Victoria was also a little guilt-stricken concerning this. Hence, she coughed slightly to ease the tension as she reconstructed her sentence in her mind before saying, “Although you were the one who suffered from shame in the end, we are a team, aren’t we? Does that not indicate that I am also suffering from shame?”

Victoria’s words unintentionally pleased Alaric greatly.

Alaric quirked his brow at her remarks as he stretched out his hand and hugged Victoria’s shoulders in front of Nicole and Nathan. Then, he pulled her into his arms and murmured, “Wow, you are so self-conscious. So, you finally know how to share weal and woe with me?”

As for Nicole and Nathan, they smiled when they saw this scene.

Victoria looked up and saw the sly smile playing on the edges of his lips. After she gave it careful thought, she immediately understood why Alaric was so happy. This rendered her slightly speechless. Seriously? He’s getting all happy merely because of what I said? Hah, I knew it. I can really read him like a book as per usual.

Chapter 584 Nowhere to Sleep

Honestly, Victoria was tired after shopping around for about an hour. Plus, the bags only got heavier as time passed, but before she could say anything, Alaric interjected, “Let’s catch a break.”

Then, he pushed the shopping cart toward the elevators. There was a lounge upstairs and a mall, where Mary and Sasha were having a look around.

“I wonder how they’re doing,” she mumbled while strolling.

“You mean Mom and Sasha? Don’t worry. They’re probably having a great time with their shopping spree .”

Alaric pushed the shopping cart to the checkout area and sent someone to bring the bags out after leading them to the closest restaurant. On the way back to the restaurant, he received a call from Mary.

“You guys should return home without us. We won’t be joining you,” Mary sounded a little indignant on the

other end of the line. There was a tinge of disgruntlement in her tone.

He couldn’t help but feel astonished as he asked, “Why aren’t you joining us? Do you have other plans?”

“Yeah, we booked a facial appointment and will be back in the evening. You guys... should just do whatever you want.”

When Alaric heard that they were going for a facial, he answered, “Okay.”

He was about to hang up when Mary couldn’t help but complain, “You’re glad, aren’t you?”

“Huh?” he blurted before he could press the end call button.

“Nobody is fighting over the children with you, and you can finally have them to yourselves.” When Alaric was still trying to find his bearings, she continued, “Isn’t that precisely what you were thinking when you suddenly took Nicole and Nathan away in the morning?”

He couldn’t help but sigh helplessly upon hearing her complaints. “Mom, we’ve only spent about one hour with the children in the past few days. Otherwise, they were either eating or sleeping. If they weren’t, they were always with you and Dad.”

Everything was fine in Mary’s world until he just had to bring this up. The instant he did so, Mary had nothing left in her arsenal to justify her frustrations. It was ju

st as he said—

the kids had been accompanying them throughout their visit, and it had only been one hour since Alaric took the children away.

It was just one hour...

She just parted with her grandchildren for barely an hour, and she was already finding it utterly unbearable. What about Alaric and Victoria, then? Could they handle such a thing? The moment she put herself in their shoes, she couldn't help but think that she was being a cranky harpy. "I got it. They'll stay with you while I'm going for a facial with Sasha. I'll be home later."

"Okay." This time, Alaric hung up without any feelings of remorse.

Mary sat in the same spot in a daze after ending the call. Sasha, who had been in a corner while she was making the call, approached her. "What's wrong?"

Mary turned her attention to Sasha as she recalled the things Alaric said earlier and divulged, "Do you think I've been hogging their kids for too long recently?"

Her question caught

Sasha by surprise. As there was a distance between her and Victoria since she wasn't Victoria's birth mother, she didn't dare to regard Victoria as her own. That was because there

was a nagging thought in her mind that would keep reminding her that she didn't have the right to do so.

Hence, she wasn't that close with Victoria and didn't dare to help babysit her kids. In the past five years, Victoria had been taking care of her kids herself. Furthermore, when Sasha married Tony, the kids were no longer babies, and she didn't have the guts like Mary to forcibly hog the kids' attention.

When she saw how Mary was spending time with the children, she was full of envy and truly wanted a relationship like theirs. Still, it never occurred to her that Mary would be in distress over something like this.

“Why would you think that? Nicole and Nathan are still young and need someone to watch over them. You’re not just purely hanging around them.”

“But... The kids aren’t the only ones that need attention. Even the parents would long for their company as well.” A weary sigh escaped Mary’s lips. “If Alaric hadn’t brought this up to me, I might have continued with my blunder. Just because I adored the kids, I kept them by my side all the time and didn’t consider their emotions.”

At the mention of this, Mary sighed a few more times and said that she wouldn’t keep the kids by her side all the time anymore, no matter how deeply she loved them.

The moment Sasha saw Mary so desolate, Sasha could only offer her some consolation but couldn’t say anything else since Victoria wasn’t her daughter. Instead, they chatted in the same spot for about fifteen minutes before heading toward the beauty salon.

While they were having their facials in the same room, Sasha almost fell asleep on the beauty bed with her

eyes closed when she heard Mary sighing and speaking about Nicole and Nathan again

So, she comforted Mary once more and when they were about to finish their session, Mary couldn’t help but bring up the same issue again. In the end, while comforting Mary, it suddenly dawned upon Sasha that having a close bond with others could also be a burden for both parties.

I have to learn from this and not do the same as her once I have grandchildren. Otherwise, I’ll be worrying every

day until I grow old, she thought.

So, before they left the beauty salon, Sasha said something that made a huge impact on Mary. “You shouldn’t brood over it anymore. Sometimes there are just things in life that you can’t control, and you have to let it run its natural course. Besides, the more you th

ink about it, the more it makes you worry. Furthermore, you'll grow old very quickly if you keep brooding over things."

Mary honestly didn't think anything of her words until she heard the very last sentence, and her face fell. "Grow

old?"

"Yeah. You'll have more wrinkles if you keep worrying your head over something you can't control."

"You're right. How can I forget about this? No, I'll have to stop thinking about this."

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That proved to be effective, and Mary finally stopped bringing this up when they were on the way back. When she returned home, she didn't even mention that she wanted to have the kids in her room to spend the night. Instead, she turned in early that night to have her beauty sleep.

Meanwhile, Victoria was surprised when Nicole and Nathan stayed in her room to sleep as she assumed that Mary would definitely ask to have the kids spend the night in her room. She also figured that Mary would be extra impatient after being apart from the kids for such a long time when she went to the beauty salon. Thus, it was to her immense surprise that Mary didn't.

So, Victoria plopped into bed after her shower and the kids lay at her sides, each hugging one of her arms. In contrast to Nathan's silence, Nicole was a little chatterbox, and this was the scene that greeted Alaric when he joined them in the room.

Before he could experience such a cozy moment, he suddenly realized a severe issue—his spot in the bed was

taken.

The room was prepared by the Selwyns for Victoria and the bed was rather large. Normally, it

was enough for Victoria and the kids, and big enough for two adults. As for three people ... Well, it would be a snug fit for the three women, but it might be a little uncomfortable when they drifted off to sleep.

However, there were two kids now and Alaric was a grown man. Hence, if the kids were sleeping next to Victoria, there was no way he would fit in as well.

Yeah, I can still take a seat at the side of the bed. I can forget about joining them in bed and sleeping through the night, though, he thought in resignation.

Chapter 585 An Out

When Alaric realized the possibility of this issue, he could barely maintain the smile on his face. As a father, he couldn't wait to lay in bed with his wife and kids, especially since he had lost his wife once. But if there's no space for me here...

At the thought of this, he pulled a long face. If this was happening in his own house, he would ask someone to deliver a new bed on the same night. Forget it. I think there's formaldehyde in a new bed.

In the past, Alaric would never consider this issue, but now that he was a father of two, he started to consider safety issues. Even if a new bed is delivered, we can't use it right away. The bed has to be ordered ahead and the formaldehyde removed before it can be used, he thought and made a decision in his heart to make a call back home and order a new bed once the kids were asleep.

The three people in bed had no idea what was going on in Alaric's mind, but when Victoria saw him coming over, she gently told the kids to make some space. So, the three of them moved to the side a little and scrounged up a small spot for Alaric.

Alaric glanced at the empty spot. It would fit him if he remained a motionless statue, but he wouldn't be able to turn or flip to his side at night.

An embarrassed Victoria looked at the small spot and said, "I think the bed is too small. Why don't you-

She wanted to suggest that he sleep in the next room or lay out a mattress on the floor, but before she could say it out loud, he paced over and made himself as comfortable as he could in that spot.

"It's just nice," Alaric said immediately the instant his back touched the bed, worried that Victoria might send

him elsewhere.

She propped herself on one arm and looked at him in the small spot in utter bafflement. He can't even move an inch in that spot, but he says it's just nice?

Even the outspoken Nicole noticed the issue and pointed at his spot after sitting up. "Daddy, that spot you're sleeping in is too small."

Showered in their concerned gazes, Alaric forced out a smile. "No, it's not. I think it's just nice."

"Daddy." Nicole frowned as she continued to stare at him. "That spot is really too small!"

Alaric didn't say a word as he pursed his lips, not knowing how to convince the mother and daughter duo to leave it well alone. Just when he thought that Nicole would ask him to sleep elsewhere because the spot was too small, she suddenly wriggled her butt backward. "Don't worry, Daddy. I'll make more space for you."

All the worries he had disappeared, and his heart melted at her actions. "Nicole..."

That explained why the Internet always claimed that daughters were far more caring than sons. Now he had actual proof that the Internet ramblings were true. Previously when Nathan wasn't interested in interacting with him, Nicole was already very friendly with him. She even decided to squish herself further so that he could sleep better.

Although he was touched, he didn't move and merely gazed at her adorable face, saying gently, "It's okay, Nicole. I can sleep here. If you keep moving backward, you'll have no space left for yourself."

She blinked at him and answered with an innocent expression, "No, Daddy. There's space because Mommy will hold me while I sleep at night." Then, she scurried into Victoria's embrace right before his eyes, as though she

was taking refuge within her arms.

This sight immediately made him jealous, and all the heartwarming feelings he had earlier evaporated. Instead, he thought that she was deliberately showing off. Of course, it was an indirect and unintentional act.

Nonetheless, it was exactly because of this that she had deliberately rolled over for him. At first, Alaric merely wanted to lie in his spot because he was worried that Victoria would send him out of the room if he had taken the space from

her kids. Yet, judging from the situation now, he reckoned that wouldn't be happening and it would be fine if he discretely wriggled closer to them.

So, it was with this thought in mind that he scooted closer to his family. As he expected, Victoria, who had Nicole in her arms, said nothing, and he inched in closer.

The scent of his shower gel traveled up Victoria's nose, along with a little humidity, and she flinched. "It'll be too cramped if you come any closer."

Alaric had planned to continue snuggling toward them if she hadn't voiced her objection. Regardless, he stopped moving upon hearing that, placed his arms over his chest, and tried his best not to squeeze toward them. His every move and expression were incredibly humble, and he sighed wearily.

"It's getting late. Let's sleep."

It wouldn't be an issue for the adults if they stayed up a couple more hours at night, but that was not the case for the children. Children had to adhere to a strict and healthy bedtime. So, Victoria didn't say anything more. Instead, she told the children to go to sleep, asked Alaric to switch off the lights, and went to bed holding the

kids.

Nathan obediently lay on his side and drifted off to sleep very quickly after closing his eyes. On the other hand, Nicole played with Victoria's hair to pass the time. Then, she started fidgeting with the buttons on her pajamas, moving around, and even blabbering, "Mommy, this is the first time we're sleeping with Daddy."

Kids

had always been bold with their words. Besides, they didn't know that Victoria had lost her memory because the adults had no intention of letting the kids learn about it. Nonetheless, they didn't expect Nicole to

suddenly blurt out something like that.

Alaric had just switched off the lights and was about to rest when she said that, and he froze. In the dark, Victoria could see the tense line of his shoulders under the weak moonlight and could clearly see him holding his breath. She sighed inaudibly at the sight.

When she saw the Facebook post before this, she already had an idea that things weren't so simple between her and Alaric. However, she wasn't expecting a child to put it out there on the table.

On the other hand, Alaric merely froze for a second under the cover of darkness before he joined them in bed again as though nothing had happened.

In the beginning, Victoria could feel that his breathing was uneven, but slowly, he started to breathe normally again. As she could only see his figure in the dark and not his face, she couldn't see what expression he had

either.

Nevertheless, she could still hazard a guess, and she bet that he might not sleep well tonight. She wanted to say something, but it would sound weird if she said something now.

"Mommy?" Nicole called in bafflement when she didn't receive an answer, but unfortunately, Victoria didn't answer her. "Are you asleep, Mommy?" she inquired.

Still, there was no answer. Next to them, Alaric held his breath as he listened to the conversation. After a few seconds, he said in a soft voice, "Nicole, maybe Mommy is already asleep. You should be good and go to sleep. early, okay?"

Victoria breathed a sigh of relief as she had no idea how to answer Nicole. Thus, when Alaric answered her on her behalf, she couldn't help but feel grateful to him. Frankly, she wasn't prepared to uncover the truth now because she had no idea what was going on. Moreover, his explanation provided her with a good way out of

the situation.