

Departure with a Belly Chapter 271

Departure with a Belly Chapter 271

Chapter 271

“Sir, what are you doing here?” The last time Nicole saw him was on the plane, and for a

long time after that, she hadn’t seen him. So, she was surprised and curious to see him here out of the blue.

Alaric couldn’t help but smile when he heard her sweet bell-like voice. Just based on her voice alone, he reckoned that she was usually especially favored. There was also no doubt that she would act cute just to get the cookie jar as it were. Exactly like the way she was in the live broadcasts, she was a witty little girl.

“I’m here to visit the school and didn’t expect to bump into you two.” Alaric’s eyes swept past Nathan.

In contrast, Nathan wasn’t anything close to cute, and neither was he as friendly as Nicole. When Alaric crouched down, the look in the little guy’s eyes became defensive,

and he even silently held Nicole's hand. This was his display of resistance toward Alaric, but it didn't make him mad. On the other hand, he silently praised Nathan's reaction.

"Huh? Are you here to visit the school, Mr. Good Looks? Are you married? Do you have a

baby, too?" Being the curious toddler that she was, Nicole asked all sorts of questions.

Chapter 271 A Useful Identity

Alaric's brows shot up, and he didn't know how he should answer her for a moment.

After a few seconds, he took a glance at the defensive Nathan and said, "Don't call me Mr. Good Looks. Let's change to a different address. You can call me Mr. Night."

277

"Mr. Night?!"

"Are you Mr. Night?"

This time, both kids were shocked because they couldn't believe that he was the Silent Night who was tipping them on their broadcasts all the time.

Alaric quirked a brow at them and asked, "I don't seem like him?" The kids went quiet at

his question. "Or you don't believe that I'm Mr. Night?" Then, he whisked out his phone and opened his account to show it to the kids.

When he showed them his phone, Nicole's head moved over to take a look. After she saw it with her eyes, she gasped in delight and hugged him. "Mr. Night!"

Alaric held her with one arm and raised his gaze toward the other half of the twins.

When he saw that Nathan was still in the same spot, he couldn't help but look a little impressed as he thought, This little man is really wary.

"Aren't you going to take a look?" he asked. Nathan took a look at him and dragged his

feet over. Alaric smirked as he passed the phone to him. "Would you like to make sure?

Or else, *you* might think that I'm a bad guy or an imposter."

His words gave away the thoughts on Nathan's mind, and even though the little guy's expression remained unchanged, his ears had turned red in embarrassment.

Nevertheless, he took over the phone and started to check. At first, he was a little stiff and cautious, but when he saw that Alaric wasn't reacting defensively, he started to play with his phone in front of him. Once he ensured that Alaric was truly whom he said he was repeatedly, only then did he return the phone to Alaric.

Alaric smiled as he looked at Nathan. "Are you done making sure? Are you still

suspicious of me now?”

Nathan quietly pursed his lips tightly together. On the other hand, after Nicole found out that he was Silent Night, she hugged his arm even tighter, acting as intimate as she would with her family. “Mr. Night, why didn’t you tell me that you’re Mr. Night on the plane last time?”

“Huh?” Alaric pretended to think. “Maybe it was my first time seeing you, so I was in a daze.”

“Oh, then are you here today to sign up for your baby?”

Chapter 271 A Useful identity

Alaric didn’t think that this question would pop up again, and he contemplated before. chuckling. “My baby is already signed up. They’re in this school as well.”

“Really? What are their names?”

A smile spread across his face. “I’ll introduce them to you the next time if there’s a chance.”

“Okay!”

AFT

Greg stood at a distance and was a little dumbstruck as he watched them chat away happily. Due to their happy interaction, the little seed of suspicion grew into a massive tree. So, he turned to Terrance and couldn't help but voice his doubt, "Mr. Levane, may I ask how they are related?"

Terrance smiled slightly and merely retorted with a question, "Would you like to make a guess?"

Greg stared at Terrance speechlessly as he thought, I don't have the guts to do that!

As Alaric wasn't formally related to the kids and they had classes to attend, he left after spending only twenty minutes with them. Nonetheless, although they had already

Chapter 271 A Useful Identity

made it back to the car, it was obvious that he was in high spirits.

Terrance immediately noticed this and used this opportunity to pass the thermos to him. "Mr. Cadogan, it's cold today. Have something to keep yourself warm."

Since Alaric was in a good mood, he readily accepted the thermos Terrance passed to him and took a couple of sips. In the thermos was the oatmeal powder drink that he

had prepared for him with warm milk. Right now, the temperature was just right, and his stomach felt warm after having a few gulps.

Perhaps because Alaric was in an excellent mood today as he took a few more sips under Terrance's watchful gaze before returning the thermos to him.

"Mr. Cadogan, would you like to have more for the benefit of your health? After all... you're not alone now."

Alaric's hand paused mid-air while holding the thermos, and his almond-shaped eyes lowered as though he was digesting Terrance's words. A few seconds later, he raised his head and smiled. "You're right."

Terrance gaped at Alaric in stunned silence as he hadn't seen Alaric smile from the bottom of his heart like this for a very long time since he started working for him. Ever since the passing of Old Mrs. Cadogan, Mr. Cadogan has locked himself away. So, is he

finally opening his heart now?

Hence, he stared as Alaric finished the oatmeal in the thermos slowly and kept the thermos away when he was finished. While he twisted the lid on, he said, "Earlier when I was watching you with the children, I thought that the scene was very beautiful, and they truly resemble you. I even took a picture."

Alaric's eyes flickered at that. "Picture? Send it to me."

Terrance sent the picture to his phone, and his lips instinctively curled upward after seeing the picture. Meanwhile, Terrance was still speaking, "I thought that since you were chatting away so happily, there wouldn't be any harm if I took a picture in secret. But I think the little boy seemed quite wary of you. He's very mature for such a young boy."

Alaric pursed his lips. "It's great that my child is vigilant, lest he gets cheated one day."

My child... Terrance sighed at his words. "Mr. Cadogan, is he your child? Aren't you going to do a paternity test?"

Alaric merely snorted as he asked, "Is there a need for that?"

Okay, it really seems unnecessary when they look so alike. Just the fact that Victoria

was the children's mother and ninety-nine percent of the children's features took after Alaric's, if they were not his flesh and blood, then everything he knew about genetics and heredity was probably a lie. "What are we going to do next? Should we let Miss Selwyn know about this?"

"No." Alaric shook his head. If she found out about this, she would probably flee with the kids yet again. Once that happened, not only could he not find them, but the kids would also develop a strong dislike for him.

The thing he needed to do now was, increase his presence around the kids with his identity as Silent Night. Today, he deliberately revealed this identity to them because Nathan was too guarded against him, so he had no other choice but to use this particular identity. Although it was a little despicable of him to take advantage of the children's naivety, he couldn't deny that it was very useful.

Chapter 272

In the afternoon, Victoria went to pick her two kids up from school at the usual time. She noticed the black car once again as they left the school. It had changed its parking spot but remained silently stationed there.

Perhaps it belongs to another parent, she thought, realizing she might have been overthinking things earlier. She had not had the time to buy a car yet due to her busy schedule. However, now that she was thinking about it, walking everywhere was rather time-consuming. So, she figured that having a means of transportation would be better. Otherwise, it would become inconvenient for school pick-ups.

So, she began researching affordable cars for daily commuting upon returning home. She did not plan to purchase anything too expensive since a car was primarily a mode of transport, and because she might need to spend a lot of money on the children in the future. Her budget was around 30,000.

She quickly found a cost-effective model and scheduled a visit to the dealership for a test drive the next day. As the clock approached bedtime, she urged her two children to get ready for sleep. They obediently went to their rooms without any fuss.

She then walked to the window and was just about to close the curtains when she caught a glimpse of a black car parked near the streetlamp downstairs. It bore a

striking resemblance to the one she had seen at school earlier in the day. She furrowed her brow as her movement paused, questioning whether it was the dim light or her imagination.

A nagging suspicion grew within her. She felt that this black car was indeed the same one she had seen earlier. She felt compelled to take a closer look, but just as she was about to do so, a new message notification appeared on her phone. She picked it up casually, glanced at the sender, and froze.

The sender was none other than Silent Night, who had been silent for a considerable time. They had not communicated with each other since their last encounter.

Although Victoria had intended to repay him the money, she had not pressed him for his bank account details due to his lack of response. But the fact that he suddenly reached out to her now...

She clicked on his profile and found a simple message: 'Hello.'

Since they had not been in contact for a while, she was somewhat surprised to receive his message. As she looked at her last message, she realized that she asked for his bank account information, which he had not responded to. Did his initiative to message her now indicate that he was finally willing to accept the money from her? So, she quickly replied, 'Good evening, Mr. Night.'

Alaric, who was sitting in the car, glanced at her reply, and his eyes narrowed dangerously.

After a moment, he looked up and fixed his gaze on the slender figure standing by the window. She responded promptly and with a gentle tone to other men's messages, but when it came to him...

As time passed, he still had not replied to her message. Victoria thought for a moment and decided to take the initiative. 'Mr. Night, have you been busy lately? You never replied to my previous message asking for your bank account information.'

He took his time before responding with a simple 'Yes.'

'Could you please send me your bank account details if you have the time now? I will transfer the money back to you.'

'Okay.'

She furrowed her brow upon noticing his apparent indifference in words, but she considered it understandable. Someone as extravagant as he probably held a significant social status and would not care about money or bother to flatter others.

Regardless, all she needed to do was repay the money and not worry about anything

else. She had been waiting for a response for a long time. Yet, Silent Night had not sent

her the bank account number. This made her feel that something was amiss, prompting her to nudge him again.

'Mr. Night?'

'Yes, when are you free? Let's meet.'

Finally, his new message contained more words, but the request confused her. Did they

really need to meet just to transfer the money?

‘Mr. Night, can’t I directly transfer the money to your account?’

‘I only accept cash.’

She was rendered speechless, and it seemed that he also sensed it because another message came in just then.

‘It’s fine if you don’t want to do it.’

She finally realized that the other party did not actually need her to repay the money; he

was using this method to make her back down. However, she did not want to keep his money. So, she replied after contemplating for a while, ‘Where should we meet?’

Alaric’s expression turned glacial. He tightly pursed his lips, clearly displeased with her response. He simply put away his phone without replying. Even Terrance, who sat in the

driver’s seat, could sense the sudden chilling aura emanating from Alaric. He looked at Alaric uneasily and asked, “Mr. Cadogan, what’s wrong?”

“Let’s go,” he ordered in a cold tone. Terrance did not know what was going on, but nonetheless, he followed the instruction and drove the car away.

Meanwhile, Victoria had been waiting for a while, but she did not receive any response

from the other party. Although she found it a bit strange, she did not pursue an answer. After all, he would naturally inform her if he found a location. If he was not in a hurry, then she should not be either.

Now that she had reassured herself, she kept her phone away and suddenly remembered something. She walked to the window and looked in the direction where the black car had parked earlier; the spot was empty. The streetlights elongated the shadow of the tree as if the black car she had glimpsed earlier was just an illusion. She frowned slightly and closed the curtains.

The next day, as soon as she finished getting ready and walked out of her room, she noticed a person in her living room. The person stood up from the couch and greeted

her with a smile.

“Victoria, you’re up.” It was Bane, whom she had not seen for several days. He smiled warmly, and his gaze softened upon seeing her. Her expression shifted slightly, but she still nodded in response.

“Good morning. Why are you here?”

“Well, didn’t we agree for you to think it over? A few days have passed, and I assume you’ve made up your mind.” He then quickly changed the subject, seemingly concerned

that she might refuse. "Shall I drive you all today?"

She remained silent as she glanced at him, and after a few seconds, she asked, "Have you resolved the matters with your company recently? Do you have the time?" If he did, she felt it was necessary to find an opportunity for a sincere conversation about their relationship.

Bane seemed to understand her intention and took a moment before replying, "I only have time to drive you and the children to the company and school."

He truly was omnipresent, and his response left her momentarily speechless. After she considered it for a moment, she decided to decline his offer. "If you're so busy, then there's no need for you to drive us. I plan to buy a car myself."

His gaze dimmed briefly as he heard that, but he quickly regained composure. "Buy a car? Have you made up your mind?"

"Yes, I have. I'm going to check it out today."

He responded, "Then, I'll accompany you."

"You don't have to. Besides, didn't you say you don't have time?"

"I still have the time to accompany you in choosing a car of your own."

She was about to refuse when something crossed her mind. So instead, she nodded. "Alright, then. Thank you in advance for accompanying me to choose a car. It just so happens that I have something to discuss with you later."

Chapter 273

Bane did not expect her to be so straightforward. He stood there for a moment, looking at her helplessly. "In that case, can I take you, Nicole, and Nathan to school today?" Since Victoria intended to clarify things with him that day, she did not think it would matter if he brought them to school one last time.

"Okay," she agreed.

On the way to school, she remained unusually quiet while Nicole chattered incessantly, and Bane patiently responded to her throughout the entire journey. When they arrived at the school, he even personally got out of the car to escort the two children inside. Victoria quietly watched from the side, but at that moment, she suddenly felt a cold, piercing gaze on her back.

Thus, she instinctively looked in the direction of the gaze. She was momentarily stunned when she saw the black car from the previous day. After all, it could not be an illusion if she saw the car two days in a row and continued to feel as though she was under watch. She intuitively felt that something was wrong. As she reflexively turned to

face the car and was about to walk in that direction, Bane called her, "Victoria."
Bane's voice snapped her back to reality. "What's wrong?" he asked.

He might have noticed that she had been staring in a particular direction, so he walked toward her, stopped by her side, and followed her line of sight. His movements paused when he saw the black car, and his eyes narrowed slowly.

"It's nothing." Victoria regained her composure and gently shook her head. She did not want to tell Bane about this matter. It was all just her intuition after all, and what if it was all in her head? Besides, the car was parked at the school gate, and nobody in the school seemed to find it suspicious. It was probably just a parent of one of the students. She pursed her lips and furrowed her brows, still thinking about the cold, piercing gaze she had felt.

"Aren't you going to the company? You should go ahead and take care of your business.

My company is not far from here, and I can easily walk there."

"Victoria, Bane said. His expression clearly disagreed with her suggestion. But she persisted and looked at him firmly. "You've already gone through the trouble of bringing the children here. You should go and take care of your matters. As for our issue... let's discuss it this afternoon, alright? I'll explain everything to you then."

In the end, he could only nod and agree to her suggestion.

Even after Bane disappeared from sight, Victoria was still standing there for a while before she slowly approached the black car. Initially, she had planned to go to the company in Bane's car, but now, there was something else she wanted to find out, so she decided to shoo him off.

Soon, she was right before the black car and stopped beside it. Alaric frowned upon seeing her standing next to his car. But before he could say anything, Terrance, who was sitting next to him, asked anxiously, "Has Miss Victoria noticed us?" Alaric pursed his lips tightly upon hearing that and replied indifferently, "No, as long as you don't do anything st*pid."

Terrance was left speechless by Alaric's response. After all, what st*pid thing could he possibly do? He had been sitting inside the car without moving an inch the whole time. Knock. Knock.

While Terrance was desperately trying to wrack his brain to get them out of this mess, Victoria suddenly bent down and lightly tapped the car window twice. This startled Terrance, putting him on edge. Regardless, she received no response after knocking on the window. Initially, she had thought that someone would roll down the window if anyone were to sit inside. But she did not give up because she had clearly felt the cold gaze staring at her from inside the car. Her hunch would never go wrong twice in a row. So, it was with that thought in mind that she slowly bent down, intending to lean on the

“Get down!” At that moment, Alaric ordered in a hushed tone, and Terrance snapped back to his senses, quickly following suit by lying flat. Victoria was seen leaning half of her body on the car window, carefully peering inside.

The sunlight outside was intense, and she had been standing under the sun for a while, so her vision was not the best. As such, even when she was leaning on the window, she still could not see what was inside-it was pitch black. But she continued staring intently.

Inside the car, the two men remained still. Alaric was flat on his back on the seat, quietly watching her. Meanwhile, Terrance held his breath in fear. He never expected Victoria's vigilance to be so strong. They had not done anything. In fact, it was only their second day there, and yet she had already discovered them!

After a while, she finally gave up as she probably saw nothing. Once she was out of sight, Terrance finally breathed a sigh of relief. "Mr. Cadogan, that was a major scare. How did she know someone was in the car?"

Both of them looked as though they were trying to mimic human pancakes, probably still startled by her sudden inspection. They were afraid she might return suddenly, so they did not dare to sit up straight. They only did so after confirming that she had truly

left. Alaric's expression was gloomy. Terrance, on the other hand, looked frightened as he patted his chest, attempting to soothe his pounding heart.

"That really scared me. So, what do we do next?" Terrance inquired. However, Alaric merely shot him a cold glance, pursing his thin lips without saying a word. After a moment, he opened the car door and got out.

Nicole brought snacks for break time today. Nonetheless, shortly after she arrived at school, she started feeling a bit hungry. So, she turned to her brother, Nathan, who was

sitting next to her, and said, "Nathan, I want to eat."

Since they were twins and had spent their entire lives together, he immediately knew what she meant. Thus, he flatly rejected the idea, answering coolly, "No, we just had breakfast not too long ago." She looked at him with her big innocent eyes and pleaded, "But Nathan, I'm hungry."

He did not buy her explanation. How could he possibly believe that she was hungry again right after breakfast? "Nicole, you can't eat. Mommy said these snacks are for break time, and we can only have them after class." Even though he was only a few seconds older, he was like the wiser one, giving his younger sister advice and restraining her unruly behavior.

"But... it's the same, isn't it? If I eat now, there just won't be any snacks left for break

time." As she spoke, she sneakily tried to reach for the zipper on her backpack. Nathan was about to stop her when a familiar but slightly cold male voice called their names from behind, "Nathan. Nicole."

Nicole stopped what she was about to do. As she turned and saw Alaric standing

outside, she could not help but exclaim, "Mr. Night!"

She immediately let go of her backpack and ran toward him. She was wearing a pleated dress today, and when she ran, she looked like a fluttering butterfly.

Although Alaric

was initially in a gloomy mood, he quickly felt uplifted when he saw Nicole dashing toward him. Even the resentment in his eyes gradually faded, and as she approached, he squatted down and reached out to catch her, making sure she would not trip accidentally.

"Mr. Night! You're here again!"

Chapter 274

Likewise, Nathan paused when he saw Alaric. Still, it took him a few moments before he slowly got up and walked over.

Once he came near Alaric, he addressed in a muffled voice, "Mr. Night."

Alaric hummed and nodded. His gaze was slightly resigned as he looked at Nathan.

This little guy is far more alert than Nicole. Look at him being so defensive even after I have revealed my identity. Nonetheless, through his reaction, it looks like I still need to find a way to make this little guy trust and rely on me. Then again, Nathan and Nicole will obviously realize my motive if I come to their school every day.

Alaric narrowed his eyes slightly as he thought over the strategies he should take in

order to get into the children's good books.

Suddenly, Nicole's voice sounded, snapping Alaric out of his thoughts, "Mr. Night, who is your baby? Can we finally meet your baby today?" she asked, still thinking about the baby Alaric mentioned yesterday.

1/9

Alaric placed his hand on her head gently as he replied softly, "I can't take my baby here

to meet the two of you yet today. How about another day?"

Chapter 274 Could It Be That He Wants to Meet You?

"Well... Alright."

2/9

Afterward, Alaric glanced at Nathan, who stood quietly by the side. However, there was no concealing the tight grip he had on Nicole, and silently thought, I probably can't stay any longer. Today is just the second day, yet Nathan's attitude seems even more reserved than yesterday. Hence, this little guy will likely act even more defensive later if I continue to stick around, and when that happens, it will be tough for me to make him let his guard down with ease again.

The moment this thought crossed Alaric's mind, he immediately rose to his feet. "I am here today because I have to deal with other stuff. So, I thought I should drop by and check on the two of you for a while. Now that I know you are fine, I will return to work." Nicole blinked her bright eyes as she asked, "Mr. Night, are you not especially here to check on us? Then, will you not talk to us later?"

“I’m sorry.” Alaric restrained his desire to stay. “I really have work to do.”

Instantly, Nicole put on a disappointed expression, looking utterly dejected.

up his

On the contrary, Nathan, who stood beside her, let his guard down and eased reserved attitude after he heard Alaric say he was simply dropping by to see them.

Chapter 274 Could It Be That He Wants to Meet You?

3/9

Tsk, as expected of a child... Although Nathan was smart, he was still inexperienced in life.

Alaric didn’t hang around any longer. Instead, he immediately left after he bid his goodbyes to Nathan and Nicole.

Meanwhile, in the principal’s office, Alaric sat by the windowsill with a phone in his hand, and his gaze fixated on the message Victoria sent last night. I know now is undoubtedly not a good time for a meet-up, but I can’t suppress my jealousy when I remember the difference in how Victoria treated me versus the other men. Also, I can’t believe she would ask Bane to send her to Nathan and Nicole’s school this morning! So, does that mean Bane knows she is a mother of two? And based on how Bane acted this morning, he seemed extremely fond of Nathan and Nicole. It was as though he was trying to court Victoria through the children. Still, what alarmed me the most was that Nathan and Nicole weren’t wary of him.

Alaric instantly became alert as he thought of that. What if Bane is one step ahead of

me...

It was with this likelihood that crossed his mind that he swiftly typed out a new message and sent it to the chatroom, which had remained the same since last night.

Chapter 274 Could it t

hat He Wants to Meet You?

'Are you available to make the transaction today?'

'What time today?' Victoria was probably free as she was fast to reply to the text.

'This afternoon.'

'Mr. Al, I'm afraid I can't make it this afternoon. Can you reschedule and make it tomorrow?'

As soon as Alaric saw Victoria suggest postponing the meeting to tomorrow, he pursed his lips and typed in displeasure. 'You are busy this afternoon?'

'Yeah. I'm so sorry. I have other affairs that I need to deal with this afternoon.'

Her reply made Alaric wonder what business she could have this afternoon. Yet, as soon as Alaric remembered Bane's gaze when he looked at Victoria before leaving, he promptly connected the dots. Even though I couldn't hear what they were talking about at that time, they should be discussing something important as Victoria looked solemn. I have known her for years and even grew up with her. Of course, I can read her facial

expression well. One look and I could tell that she had something serious to discuss. with Bane. As for the topic of their discussion-

Alaric immediately snapped out of his thoughts and texted back. 'I'm sorry I can't. I

Chapter 274 Could It Be That He Wants to Meet You?

have work tomorrow, and I urgently need the money now. So, you have to clear your afternoon schedule today!

Victoria furrowed her brows slightly when she read Alaric's reply, for she could sense every ounce of assertiveness in his message.

6/9

It was just like last night, if Victoria wanted to pay Alaric back, she had no choice but to do things his way.

At this moment, Victoria somewhat felt that she was getting guilt tripped.

Even though she could call Bane and tell him that he didn't have to accompany her to select a car, the other party's assertiveness strongly discomfited her. Although she could always cancel on Bane and reschedule, this Mr. Al was setting off some warning bells in her mind. As a result, her instinct was warning her not to meet them.

Still, she was in a dilemma when she remembered the other party said he urgently needed the money,

Therefore, Victoria replied, 'If you really need the money now, I can immediately transfer the money to you. Besides, I don't feel safe carrying that much cash.'

After she sent the message, she started to feel that the other party's request was
Chapter 274 Could It Be That He Wants to Meet You?

have work tomorrow, and I urgently need the money now. So, you have to clear your
afternoon schedule today!'

Victoria furrowed her brows slightly when she read Alaric's reply, for she could sense
every ounce of assertiveness in his message.

It was just like last night, if Victoria wanted to pay Alaric back, she had no choice but to
do things his way.

At this moment, Victoria somewhat felt that she was getting guilt tripped.

Even though she could call Bane and tell him that he didn't have to accompany her to
select a car, the other party's assertiveness strongly discomforted her. Although she
could always cancel on Bane and reschedule, this Mr. Al was setting off some warning
bells in her mind. As a result, her instinct was warning her not to meet them.

Still, she was in a dilemma when she remembered the other party said he urgently
needed the money.

Therefore, Victoria replied, 'If you really need the money now, I can immediately transfer

the money to you. Besides, I don't feel safe carrying that much cash.'

After she sent the message, she started to feel that the other party's request was

10:59 Sat, 1 Ju

Chapter 274 Could It Be That He Wants to Meet You?

simply too absurd.

Coincidentally, Summer was free to have a chat with Victoria. Therefore, she briefly texted Summer and briefly explained what had happened.

After Summer heard Victoria's story, she instantly called the other woman in excitement. "Can this be a romantic encounter? Could it be that he wants to see you, but he couldn't find an excuse?"

"Huh?" Victoria was bewildered by Summer's speculation.

6/9

"What else could it be then? Think about it-why does he insist on asking for cash when it's clear you can complete the transaction via instant transfer? In addition, didn't you mention to me before that he never left a comment, only sent gifts in TikTok, and even refused to let you return the money to him?"

"Well... that's true."

"Then, that's it! Besides, he has sent you gifts on TikTok for such a long time. Judging from the amount of money he spent, I bet he doesn't lack money at all. Not to mention, there's no news about anyone embezzling public funds to send gifts to someone on Tik Tok in Corynthea for the time being."

10:59

Chapter 274 Could It Be That He Wants to Meet You?

When Victoria heard what Summer said, she couldn't help but laugh and say, "It is possible, though. What if he's the kind who embezzled public funds but has yet to be caught?"

"I can't deny that. Still, the likelihood is extremely slim. After all, the amount of money he spent to send you those gifts isn't achievable by embezzling public funds alone. Besides, do you honestly think it would go unnoticed if he embezzled such a large sum of public funds?"

"That's true."

"That's why I think he wants to meet you, but come to think of it... this does feel strange. Why would he want to meet you? You aren't the streamer. He might not even know what you look like."

What Summer pointed out in her statement was also what Victoria found odd. After all, the other party didn't know her at all. Even if they added each other's contact, they only interacted five times at most, apart from last night and today.

“How about this?” Summer gave Victoria some advice. “You can meet him if you want, but you will be the one who decides the venue. Then, reserve two tables and tell him the number of one of the tables while you wait at the other. You can decide your following move after you have seen who he exactly is. If he really urgently needs the money, he will certainly become impatient and will find you again. When that happens, you can just transfer the money to him directly.”

Victoria gave

the advice a deep thought before she explained, “I’m busy this afternoon.

I have an appointment with Bane.”

When Summer heard this, she felt adrenaline coursing through her veins as the gossipmonger in her woke up. “Huh? Bane? You have an appointment with Bane?!”

“Yeah.”

“What’s wrong? Did you finally think things through and agree to date him?” Summer chuckled.

Victoria furrowed her brows upon hearing Summer’s squeal. “No. Cut it out, Summer.”

Summer was a little bummed. “No dice, huh?”

Victoria kept quiet.

“Alright, then. Let’s forget about Bane if he truly can’t win you over. In this case, you have all the more reason to go and meet this person. After all, he is so fond of Nathan

and Nicole. Perhaps, he will develop feelings for you when you two meet. Besides, what

Chapter 274 Could It Be That He Wants to Meet You?

if you also happen to have feelings for him down the road?"

99%

Chapter 275

Victoria couldn't suppress her laughter in response to those words. "Why are you always fretting over me?"

"I'm your best buddy. If I don't worry about you, who will? Besides, this is about your future happiness. Naturally, I need to pay more attention."

Victoria listened in silence, letting out a gentle sigh. "Instead of concerning yourself with me, why don't you focus on your own life, Summer? It's been so many years, but you still haven't found a boyfriend."

"Don't divert the conversation, and don't think you can shift the blame onto me. I am having a serious conversation with you."

Victoria wanted to say more, but when Silent Night sent her another message, she quickly gave Summer a brief update.

Though Summer wasn't directly involved, her enthusiasm was palpable. "Well, hurry up and agree to it. Just do as I say."

Victoria fell speechless.

"Hurry up, Victoria. What are you contemplating? He's wealthy and successful, after all."

"I made plans with Bane this afternoon."

Summer interjected firmly, "Just cancel it."

"But—"

"That's enough. You don't even like him. Even if you disappoint him, it's beyond your control. You can't have it all. Yes, he has been kind to you, and you've known each other

since childhood, but you can't force yourself to feel something that isn't there. Just let him down. After experiencing disappointment a couple more times, he'll probably give up."

Victoria remained silent, absorbing Summer's every word. Will he really give up after enduring a few disappointments?

"However, Bane might have to be disappointed multiple times before he eventually gives up. After all, he has likely experienced numerous let-downs over these five years,

yet he hasn't relinquished his hope. Be a touch more ruthless. If it doesn't work, cut ties with him to refrain from holding him back."

“Okay, I understand.”

After ending the call, Victoria stared at her phone in silence. Cut ties with Bane?

To be honest, she wasn’t reluctant to do so; it was just that he hadn’t done anything wrong, yet she had to cut ties with him, but as Summer pointed out, he had already weathered through countless let-downs throughout the past five years, yet he hadn’t given up.

Such genuine affection...

If she refused to be a little more ruthless, she might end up hindering him.

Lost in her thoughts, Victoria gently closed her eyes.

When she reopened them, she promptly responded to the message she received that night. “How much do you need?”

Alaric pocketed his phone and turned to Terrance beside him. “Come up with a solution.”

Terrance immediately inquired, “What kind of solution?”

“Get a child we know and have them transfer to a nearby school.”

Terrance stayed silent. Where can I find a child and transfer them to a nearby school?

“Look into my distant relatives.”

At this, Terrance understood at once. “Alright, but Mr. Cadogan, the child will have almost no blood connection to the family.”

“It doesn’t matter. A slight family connection will do.”

Terrance, who was well aware of Alaric's underlying intention, knew that he only wanted the child to study there so that it wouldn't appear out of place if he went to visit the kids.

With that in mind, Terrance swiftly dispatched someone to conduct an investigation. After an extensive search, they eventually discovered one household with a four-or five-year-old child that had a tenuous connection to the Cadogan Family.

"Mr. Cadogan, I found a family with a distant and almost negligible connection to your lineage. I can't quite explain the specifics of their relations, but they currently reside in Jasea. The couple is employed at an ordinary company, and their child attends a regular nursery nearby."

Terrance presented the situation to Alaric, offering a potential solution. "I'll reach out to

1

them later to see if they are willing to send their child over here to study. However, due

to the considerable distance between their home and the school, they might not agree to it."

As soon as Terrance finished speaking, Alaric looked directly at him and said, "Use every means necessary."

“Understood.”

After finishing their work, Hopson Anderson and his wife, Janice Xenon, prepared to journey homeward together.

As a married couple, they both shared employment at the same company and routinely commuted together. Since they lived close to their workplace, they would walk home, cook, eat, and rest for about half an hour before heading back to the office together.

Their lives followed a predictable pattern, and each day passed with tranquility.

Hopson, for his part, was quite satisfied with such a life. As long as his wife did not voice her grievances, being ordinary to the point of monotony didn't bother him.

However, his wife would frequently lament his perceived inadequacy compared to

affluent men who enjoyed both wealth and prospects for promotion. Despite working in the company for many years, he seemed to be stuck in the same position. As the lamenting accumulated, Hopson harbored them deep within, which eventually coalesced into a small knot over time.

Nonetheless, this tiny knot had yet to affect their marriage; it remained a concealed burden. Lately, he had been considering opportunities for promotion or even changing jobs, but he hadn't come across a suitable company or position.

“Hopson, let's have instant noodles for lunch today. I'm a bit tired and don't feel like

cooking.”

Hearing this, Hopson furrowed his brows. “Didn’t we just have that yesterday? Are we having instant noodles again today?”

“What’s wrong with having instant noodles again? They’re easy to make. If you don’t want to eat them, you can cook something else for yourself.”

“I work so tirelessly. How can I cook?”

“Do you think you’re the only one who works? Am I not contributing financially? I prepare our meals every day. If you don’t want to eat, you can order takeout or hire a housekeeper to cook for you.”

I

u Ever Stop?

“Takeout? Hiring a housekeeper comes at a cost, you know? How will we pay the mortgage if we spend all our money?”

“Oh, so now you’re aware that we have a mortgage to repay. In that case, stop complaining. I’ll cook whatever I want. If you’re unsatisfied, *you* can cook for yourself. I promise I’ll eat whatever you make without any complaints.”

Janice’s response left Hopson speechless, and he resolved to keep his words to himself. Little did he anticipate that in the next moment, Janice would add, “Or perhaps, if you were like other men—earning and giving me an allowance each month—I wouldn’t mind preparing a feast for you. Since you lack that capability, keep your mouth shut.”

“Enough! Will you ever stop? All I did was simply say that I didn’t want to eat instant

noodles. You don't have to criticize me like this!"

"What's wrong with saying a few words? Am I not allowed to voice my thoughts when you're so pathetic? Our child is almost five years old, yet we can't even send him to a decent school. Are you worthy of being a father and a husband?"

Engaged in their quarrel as they walked, they eventually arrived at their residential complex. Their bickering continued unabated, each nitpicking the flaws of the other like embittered foes.

Their heated argument continued until a person holding a briefcase approached and intercepted their path.

"Mr. Anderson, Miss Xenon, greetings."

Hopson and Janice paused. Their attention was drawn to the well-dressed individual before them, who exuded an air of distinction that set him apart from the ordinary.

"And you are?"

Terrance offered his business card with a faint smile. "Greetings. My name is Terrance Levane. I serve as Alaric Cadogan's assistant and secretary at Cadogan Group."