

## Departure with a Belly Chapter 281

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Victoria was obviously rejecting him. After a long period of silence, Bane eventually spoke again, his tone as gentle as ever. "What's going on, Victoria? If you don't want me

to come along, do you want Ethan to join you instead? He knows a little more about these things. It wouldn't be nice if the salespeople end up scamming you while you're picking out a car."

However, before Bane could finish his words, Victoria interrupted him with a hint of annoyance in her voice. "Do I look dumb to you? Am I dumb enough to be fooled by some salesperson?" she grumbled.

"That's not what I meant."

"If that wasn't what you meant, then why do you keep insisting on getting Ethan to come along? I told you that I don't need anyone. Don't you understand what I'm saying?"

she hissed. The man was silent on the other end of the line, and Victoria regretted her words right after they slipped out of her mouth. After all, the man had been unconditionally sweet to her for the past five years. However, she also knew that she would only cause more hurt to him if she were to be nice to him then. I should cut things off instead of dragging this on any longer.

The line was silent on the other end, and Victoria assumed that Bane was too furious to

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speak to her. Why isn't he ending the call if he's mad? she wondered. Eventually, she hung up on her end of the phone before she stood in her spot and let out a long sigh. Let's just leave it like that. What I said was really hurtful, but this is the best way forward for both of us. Before getting onto the train, Victoria checked her conversation with

Silent Night once more. He still hadn't responded to her texts or phoned her. It seems like he's occupied with other matters, Victoria figured.

Victoria didn't have much to do in the evening, so she headed to the kids' school a little earlier and waited around to pick them up. She was 30 minutes early, so the school got her to go in and have a seat. The kids were still in class, so Victoria waited on one of the

benches outside without disrupting them. She pulled her phone out to scroll through her feed before calling Summer to tell Summer about what had happened that day.

Victoria and Summer had been best friends since they were young. Even though Victoria was now the mother of two kids, she still spoke like a teenager whenever she ranted to Summer about her problems. Being the best friend that Summer was, she sneakily chatted on the phone with Victoria even though she was at work. "Don't worry, Victoria. Of course, it'd be hard to reject a person who has been so nice to you. It's not as if you were ever greedy for his kindness, though. He's just too nice, and you probably feel a lot of guilt and sorrow because of the harsh, rejecting words you uttered earlier.

You need to remember not to succumb to your emotions, especially in relationships!

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You're doing the right thing now, so you shouldn't regret and go against your actions," Summer said.

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Upon hearing Summer's words, Victoria narrowed her eyes a little as she spread her lips.

into a smile. "The old you wouldn't have said such words of wisdom. Why are you being so serious this time?"

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Summer's tone seemed especially confident after that. "Oh, I witnessed something a couple of days ago. That heartless superior of mine rejected a gorgeous woman's confession right in front of my eyes! That woman used to be his classmate, and she was especially sweet toward him during their school years. She showed a lot of interest in my superior. She's smart, pretty, she has a nice figure, and on top of that, she's a dancer! But my superior was really harsh with his rejection-he told her to stop bothering him and even threatened to cut all contact with her. The woman bawled her eyes out, and I spoke to my superior after the woman left. He told me what I just told

you,” she explained.

Victoria had met Summer’s superior once. Erik Ludson was a stern and calm man with sharp and flawless features. He gave off a really strong aura, and he rarely spoke, even when prompted to. This was Victoria’s first impression of him, but after hearing all of Summer’s stories, Victoria naturally assumed that Erik was a workaholic. The advice that he had given Summer sounded like what a workaholic would say as well.

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“So, you just learned and passed his wisdom to me, huh?” Victoria chuckled.

“Of course,” Summer replied with a grin.

“I thought you used to say that your superior was really problematic. Don’t you find him problematic anymore?” Victoria asked.

“He’s still problematic, but that doesn’t stop me from using his words to offer you some comfort. Don’t you think that his words made a lot of sense?” Summer asked in return.

“Well, yeah,” Victoria agreed while chuckling. Even though Summer would often talk badly about Erik, Summer still chose to use Erik’s words to comfort and advice Victoria. This led Victoria to a sudden realization. It seems like Summer has a lot of trust in this superior of hers. She didn’t hesitate to share his words of wisdom with me. I actually with his views. He’s right-being direct, firm, and stern about everything should agree

be the way to go.

Victoria ended the call with Summer and put her phone away when she noticed that it was about time for school to end. When the two kids ran out of class, they charged over to her and jumped into her arms. “What are you doing here, Mom?” That was their first question. Victoria ruffled both her children’s hair fondly. “I came in to wait for you guys since I ended work early today,” she explained.

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“Oh...” Nicole glanced at her surroundings for a while before she spoke in her adorable voice. “I thought you would do what Mr. Night did, Mommy. He came in just to speak to us.” Victoria froze for a moment before she returned to her senses and pressed her palms against Nicole’s cheeks. “What did you just say, Nicole?” Victoria stared at her daughter intently, and Nicole widened her large, watery eyes to give her mother a puzzled look.

“I’m talking about Mr. Night! What is it, Mommy?”

“Are you talking about that guy who always shows up during your live stream sessions? That Mr. Night?” Victoria asked.

Nicole nodded, and Victoria immediately turned to look at Nathan. “Nathan? Is your sister telling the truth?”

Nathan pressed his lips together for a while before speaking. “Yes, Mommy. It seems like Mr. Night’s kid studies here, too,” he stated.

Does Silent Night have a kid? Victoria was shocked to hear this. She hadn’t expected the man to have his own kids. She had always assumed that someone like him—someone who enjoyed watching kids’ live streams and giving gifts online—was only generous with his money because he didn’t have his own family. But isn’t this a little too coincidental?

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Alarm bells rang loud in Victoria’s head. After all, Silent Night had been showing up a little too frequently in her life. First, he contacted her and failed to show up in the end. Now, the kids seemed to have bumped into him. Victoria’s expression hardened as she considered the situation.

“How many times did you guys meet each other? What did Mr. Night say?” Victoria asked.

“Actually... Mommy!” Nicole tugged on Victoria’s sleeve and crawled up higher so that she was practically hanging onto Victoria’s body. “I bumped into Mr. Night once when we were on the plane back home,” Nicole explained.

Victoria was shocked once more. “What?!”

Nathan nodded agreeably. “She’s right, Mommy. I saw Mr. Night while we were in the airport’s washroom, but he didn’t know who I was then.”

“You guys...” Victoria knitted her brows. “You guys saw him even before coming back to Jasea?”

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I don’t want to say this, but this is too much of a coincidence. Yeah, what happened over the last couple of days seems staged, but we’re in an airport in a foreign land, and we ran into each other on the airplane. That’s just... So, this is why he wanted to see me? But why isn’t he showing up?

Noticing Victoria falling into her own thoughts, Nicole came and held her. “What’s

wrong, Mommy? Are you worried that Mr. Night might be a bad guy? Don't worry. He's not a bad guy," she said cutely.

Victoria looked at her, smiling. "Even if he is a bad guy, he wouldn't write it all over his face, nor would he tell you about it."

"Um..." Nicole gave her a look of confusion, and Victoria thought it was cute.

She poked Nicole's nose. "What did he tell you when you saw him on the plane, girl?"

"I forgot!"

Huh. Knew I couldn't ask you. She turned to Nathan. "Do you remember what he said, Nathan?"

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Nathan was only a bit older than Nicole, but he was a good brother. He could speak.

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eloquently and without missing any detail either. Once he was done talking, Victoria got the gist of the matter. When she found out that he only came in the morning just to say hi and leave right away, she thought it was understandable why he wanted her to bring cash along. He chatted the kids up earlier, but he left in a hurry today. Did he need the cash?

"Mommy?" Nicole stared at her. "Have you ever seen Mr. Night?"

Victoria snapped out of it and patted the back of Nicole's head. "No," she said softly.

"We should go home now. If everything goes well, I can get the car tomorrow, and it's goodbye to the subway."

The kids followed her out, and Nicole asked, "Mommy, why isn't Mr. Bane picking us up anymore?"

The mention of Bane reminded Victoria of what she told him. She forced a smile and was about to explain, but Nicole suddenly said, "Mr. Bane!"

Victoria froze and looked ahead. Bane was standing right there, in a suit and holding his car key with one hand, then he smiled at them. "Come." He went down and opened his arms.

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A happy Nicole ditched her mother and ran toward him.

Huh. Nicole was a bit speechless. She's being really obvious.

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Nicole pounced into Bane's embrace, smiling. "And I thought you wouldn't be picking us up."

"I would never not pick you up." Bane took her bag off and whipped out a beautiful little box from his pocket.

Intrigued, Nicole asked, "What's that, Mr. Bane?"

"It's Christmas Eve soon. This is the present I got for you and Nathan."

"Christmas Eve!" Nicole took the present. She was about to open it up right away, but Bane said, "It's a surprise. Open up when you get home."

"Okay. Thanks, Mr. Bane."

Victoria held Nathan's hand and walked up to Bane. Nathan looked at his mother and sullenly said, "Hello, Mr. Bane."

Bane whipped out another box and gave it to him. "This is for you, Nathan."

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For some reason, Nathan didn't take it. Bane said, "Nathan?"

Nathan looked at his mother again, and Victoria smiled. "Say thank you." Can't say

anything harsh when the kids are around.

Since Victoria had given her permission, Nathan took the present and said thank you, then Victoria looked at him. He's really sensitive. So, he noticed what I was feeling. Seeing Nathan take the present made Bane smile, and he patted the boy's head. "Let's go. I'll take you home."

Since he was already here, Victoria led the kids into the car, though she was exceptionally quiet when she was inside. All she did was scroll through her phone and say nothing. Nicole didn't realize that, and she happily chatted away with Bane. Nathan kept quiet as well, seeing his mother was doing the same thing. He took out a book and pretended to read, but before he could even make it through a single line, Bane said, "You shouldn't read while you're in a moving car, Nathan."

Nathan paused for a moment and looked at his mother. Victoria nodded, and he tucked his book away. He thought it was over, but then Bane started a conversation about him. "You've been avoiding me the whole day. Did I do something?"

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Victoria looked at Bane and frowned.

Nathan was a little fidgety, but before long, his mother said, "You know what Nathan is like. He never avoids anyone. He's just aloof, and you're reading too much into it."

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Bane looked into the rear mirror and said nothing. Even the slow Nicole noticed something wrong, and she stopped talking to Bane. Instead, she leaned in her mother's embrace. "Mommy." Nicole looked at her, and there was no smile on her face. Instead, there was a look of unease.

Victoria patted her head, smiling, but she didn't say a word.

Things were getting weird, so Nicole stopped talking. Once they came to their destination, Victoria told the kids to thank Bane, then she said, "Thanks for taking us all the way here., but you shouldn't do this anymore. You have a lot of work to do, and I don't want you to waste your time."

"I am more than happy to do this." Bane got out and stood before her. "Can I have dinner with you guys?"

Victoria said nothing. She led the kids upstairs, and Bane followed. Once they came to their house, Victoria opened up the door and told the kids, "Go inside, kids. Mommy has

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The kids did as they were told, and Victoria closed the door. She then stood still, and silence fell between them. A while later, she turned around and smiled at Bane. "You still haven't had dinner? I think there's a good place nearby, Wanna go?"

Bane didn't seem to be affected by her obvious attempt at putting some distance between them, and he smiled, nodding, "Let's go."

They went downstairs. At the same time, the kids were leaning on the door, trying to listen in on the conversation. Alas, the door's soundproofing system was too good for them to even hear anything no matter what they did. A long while later, Nicole turned to her brother, looking solemn. "Did they get into a fight, Nathan?"

The mention of a fight made Nathan frown. "Dunno, but we should stop making any guesswork."

"If they do get into a fight, should we still talk to Mr. Bane?"

Nathan gave it some thought. "I think we should. Mommy's the one fighting with him, not us."

Nicole nodded, though she looked a little bemused.

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They came to the hospital, and Bane made his orders, asking Victoria if she liked the food. Victoria answered patiently at first, but when he asked the same thing three times in a row, she got impatient, and she frowned. "Alright, that's enough. I don't eat much anyway."

Bane froze for a moment, then he handed the menu back to the awkward waitress.

"That's all for now."

"Of course."

Once the waitress was gone, Victoria looked at Bane and decided to cut to the chase, but Bane whipped out another beautiful box and pushed it over to her. "The kids have their presents, so this is yours."

Victoria looked at the box and took it, then she opened it and revealed a beautiful brooch inside. Judging from the color and design, it was the latest model, and it fit her favorite coat perfectly. He spent so much time and effort just to pick a small gift. If I refuse him, I might look like a villain.

But then she was reminded of the advice Summer gave her. No. I shouldn't be harboring any guilt. I don't have any romantic feelings for him, so I should refuse him.

She forced a smile. "Nice brooch."

Bane adjusted his glasses. "As long as you like it."

"I do." Victoria said, "The brooch, I mean. Not the giver."

Bane was silent.

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"I like beautiful things, but that depends on who's giving. Doesn't mean I have to take anything given to me by anyone." Victoria put the brooch back in the box and pushed it back. "Keep this for someone more deserving. And don't waste your time on me. Thank you for taking care of me all these years. Tell me if you need my help with anything. I'll be right there."

"I do not buy anything wasteful." Bane pursed his lips, a look of resignation flashing in his eyes. "I only bought this because I wanted to give it to you. If you refuse, then the brooch is nothing but trash." Bane looked at the table. "You didn't want me along while you were picking your car out because of this?"

"No. I just didn't want you to come with me." Victoria stopped for a moment and coldly said, "If you hadn't come all the way to the kids' school, I wouldn't have let you take us home, nor would I be talking to you right now. I'm... getting annoyed."

Bane froze. "Annoyed?"

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"Yeah. I don't like you, and I've made that clear, but you wouldn't let me go. I get really annoyed because I have to spend so much time dealing with you every day, especially after I came back. I don't have any more patience for this, so please stop wasting your time on me. Find someone else to annoy."

A hint of darkness flashed in Bane's eyes. He couldn't believe what he was hearing, and

another voice in his head overlapped with Victoria's.

"You're annoying, you know that? Am I the only person in your whole life? Why do you keep coming to me? Go to your father, you useless trash. Why'd you bring this to me? You know why he treats me like garbage? Because you're useless!"

It was a freezing night, and the boy was forced to kneel on the cold, hard ground as his mother drenched him with a basin of cold water. The icy air seeped into his bones, almost killing him. "I-I am sorry, M... Mother..."

The woman he called his mother tossed the basin away coldly and left him freezing in the cold. The dark days of his past washed over him, drawing his soul. He bit his lip, and his hands were clenched.

Victoria was oblivious to the change, however. She looked at the table and continued coldly, "I made myself clear. Don't waste your time on me ever again. Focus on your own life." She picked up her bag and left.

The waitress came in holding some tea. When she realized she was leaving, he said, "Ma'am, your-"

"No, thank you." She left the restaurant.

The waitress saw her off dumbly, then she turned her gaze to the man at the table. He was silent, but the air around him felt... different after the woman was gone. It felt like he was locking himself up in a prison of ice that kept everyone away from him. His face was pale like he was triggered or something. Or perhaps a condition was acting up.

The waitress was scared, but she was more worried about what might happen if she left this customer alone. In the end, she went ahead carefully. "A-Are you alright, sir?" "P\*\*\*s off!" The quiet man lashed out at the waitress, shoving her tray away.

The scalding tea splashed all over the waitress, and pain made her scream, then she backed off. Everyone else in the restaurant turned their attention to the scene, and the screams made Bane snap out of his stupor. He paused for a moment and calmed down, then he helped the waitress up. "Sorry, I... wasn't in a good headspace just now. Are you alright? I'll take you to the hospital."

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The waitress came face to face with a concerned Bane, and she was bemused. This gentleman is the very same guy who yelled at me earlier? "I-I'm fine."

Bane didn't let her go, however. "Pardon me." He then pulled her sleeve up, revealing a big red patch on her arm. The look on his face changed, and he said, "You should wash that with some cold water."

"O-Okay..."

Bane went with her to the inner part of the restaurant. While the waitress was washing her arm with some cold water, he waited for her. The pain quickly subsided as the water cooled the wound down. Since it was winter, her arm almost lost feeling when she was done.

When she came out, Bane stood before her. "I'm really sorry for what happened. Let me take you to the hospital."

"It's alright. It's just a regular burn. I'm fine now."

"Let's go. This is what I should do."

The waitress couldn't resist the offer of a handsome man like Bane, so she followed  
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him.

Victoria came back home. She still felt a little guilty, but more than that, she was relieved. Bane's kindness had been overwhelming, and she always felt a little stuffy around him. Now that she had finally made it clear to him about her feelings, things were looking up for her. At least she wasn't feeling shackled now.

"You're back, Mommy." Nathan was standing on the porch.

Victoria snapped out of it and approached him. "Were you waiting for me?"

Nathan had a worried look on his face. "Did you get into a fight with Mr. Bane?"

A fight? Victoria shook her head. "No. Just wanted to clear things up with him."

Nathan could guess what was going on, and he asked, "He wanted to be our father, didn't he?"

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Victoria fell silent for a while, then she said, "Perhaps, but he won't have that idea again from now on." I made things a bit too clear with him. He wouldn't come after me unless he's a masochist.

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"So, you refused him?" Nathan caught the underlying message.

"Yes."

"Will he still see us?"

"I don't know." I hope not. It'd make cutting ties easier if we don't meet.

"So, are we going to keep staying in this place?"

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Victoria looked around the house. They should move, since this was Bane's house. Yes, she did pay the rent, but still... That would make three times I've moved since I came back, and it hasn't been a month. She didn't mind, since adults could sleep anywhere, but the kids would probably feel insecure if they had to keep moving. She asked, "Do you mind moving? Will it affect you?"

Nathan shook his head. "If you want to move, I'll tell Nicole about it."

"Thanks."

Before she slept, Victoria checked her chat history with Silent. He still hadn't texted back, and the last message was her explaining things to him. Worriedly, she thought, Did he show up and thought I stood him up, so he's ignoring me? Or maybe he's held up by something. But judging from the situation, I think the former is more likely. If it's the

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latter, he would've had time to text me by now. It's almost bedtime.

In the end, Victoria went to sleep. The next day, Victoria told Henry that she wanted to move. Since he was a local, she wanted to see if he had any recommendations.

"You're finding a place to stay? That's sudden. You should've settled that before you came to Jasea."

Victoria wouldn't tell him about her private matters, so she smiled. "I have my reasons. So, do you have any recommendations?"

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Henry was smart enough to guess what her reasons were, and he cocked his eyebrow.

"Don't tell me the house you're living in belongs to Mr. Morison. The fact that you want to move must mean you've refused him."

How does he even figure that out? “Mr. Poole, if you can focus on work as much as you focus on gossip, I think our company can grow even more.”

“Oh, this doesn’t get in the way of work. All work and no gossip will make Henry a dull manager. If you ask me, you should buy a house nearby, so you won’t have to move anymore. It’s better for the long-term future.”

Victoria did consider that, but Alaric was showing up too much, and she was starting to

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wonder if coming back was a wrong move. If Alaric would take her children away from her, then she’d rather stay overseas and probably run some small business. She didn’t have to start a company.

Noticing her frown, Henry asked, “Is something the matter?”

Victoria snapped out of it and shook her head. “It’s nothing.” I did what I had to, and now I’m running a company. If I keep hesitating, I’d be letting these people down.

Besides, I raised the kids for five years. Even if he wants to take custody, it doesn’t mean he will win. Besides, even if he wants kids, there are people willing to get knocked up by him.

A young boy was arriving at his school. He was in a car, saddling his bag. From the moment he got into the car, the boy had been huddling in a corner, staying silent. This boy was none other than Zack Anderson, son of Hopson and Janice Anderson. The sudden move to another place and change of school was already harrowing enough, and then his parents suddenly wanted him to call a stranger his uncle. And he was ordered to let this man take him to school. Zack was terrified.

From the moment he saw this man, the look on his face had been dark. Children were attuned to emotions, and they could feel who liked or hated them. He could see that this mister did not like him. So, why’d he give us so much good stuff? I don’t understand.

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The car came to a stop, and the driver said, “We’re here, sir.”

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The boy sat up and held his hands together, fidgeting even more.

The man coldly said, “From now on, I am your uncle, and you’re living with me. Do not call me by any other form of address, understand?”

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Zack might be a coward, but he knew what he should do in times like this, and he nodded. “O-Okay, sir.”

His cowardly behavior made Alaric frown. “You’re afraid of me?” If Nathan and Nicole see him like this, they’re going to think I’m a scary old man.

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The thought of leaving a bad impression on the kids because of Zack made Alaric frown. He went through so many hoops just so Nathan would let his guard down around him so they could get closer, but if things go in the opposite direction, then he saw no need for this boy. Alaric looked at the boy sharply.

Zack felt his back freezing up. Scary. I want to go home.

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Terrance couldn't take it anymore. "Calm down, sir. He's just a five-year-old boy. Of course, he's going to be scared of you if you keep looking like a big sullen man."

Alaric froze for a moment. "Is that so?"

Terrance said, "Of course it is. If you put on that look around Nathan and Nicole, they're going to be terrified of you."

And Alaric fell into silence. "W-What should I do?"

"Easy." Terrance said without missing a beat, "Treat him like how you would Nicole and Nathan."

Alaric narrowed his eyes. "You think I'd do that?" There is no way I'll be nice to someone else's kid.

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Terrance said matter-of-factly, "Of course, you can, sir. You're the one trying to get closer to the kids. You spent so much money and got your actor to play along now. Don't waste it. If you can't do this, you should just take the boy home and call it a day."

Alaric couldn't argue with that. Terrance presented a good argument. A moment of silence later, he narrowed his eyes. "You're being a bit bolder lately."

Noticing the threat in his tone, Terrance curled up a little. "Just giving a reasonable suggestion."

Alaric said nothing, and he laid his eyes on the equally scared Zack. He tried to say something, but he couldn't, so he told Terrance, "Tell him what to look out for."

Welp, guess I can't help it. He said, "Zack, is it? You don't have to be afraid..." After a long, long convincing session with a lot of helpings of 'Alaric is actually a softie, Zack seemed to buy the story, and his fear for Alaric lessened. Terrance took the chance to give Alaric a pack of candies.

Alaric moved away and frowned. "What is this?"

"For the kids. Kids love sweet stuff, and there are tons of flavors in this pack. The kids will love it."

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Alaric mused over it for a moment before taking it, then he gave one candy to Zack.

Zack wasn't that scared anymore, but he was still nervous. Only after taking the candy did he feel better.

"Time to go to school."

The headmaster welcomed him himself. Since he heard that a relative of Alaric would be attending the school, he was really nice to the boy. Even took him to the classroom himself and had the teacher assign him a seat.

Class hadn't started yet. When Nicole saw Alaric, she happily ran up to him. "Mr. Night!" Standing behind her was Nathan, and he was still cautious around Alaric. Alaric noticed that, but he looked away and went down. "Want a candy?"

"Thank you, Mr. Night." Nicole took the candy promptly.

Alaric handed Nathan a candy too, but the boy was slower in taking it, and he didn't eat it right away. He was checking out Zack.

Zack was looking at the beautiful pair of siblings. Even though they were only five, he could get a vibe from them. A vibe telling him that these kids were more valuable than

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he was. He stared at the ground and moved to Alaric's back.

Nicole noticed that, and she asked, "Is this your son, Mr. Night?"

Alaric sighed. "Technically, he's my relative's kid."

Nicole blinked. "The one in our school?"

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"Yeah. His parents are busy, so they told me to pick a school for him," he lied. Alaric wouldn't lie in most cases, but he had to. Still, he felt guilty lying to the innocent Nicole. Feels like I'm some sort of perv.

Nicole was oblivious to everything, and she quickly went around to say hi to Zack. "Hi, I'm Nicole Selwyn, and this is my brother, Nathan. What's your name?"

Nicole was fair, and her skin was perfect. She was wearing a beige coat, and her hair was tied into a pair of brads. She looked adorable and friendly. Sheepishly, Zack said, "Zack Anderson."

Nicole could get friendly with anyone easily, and Zack quickly blended in with the kids. Alaric said, "Zack's more of an introvert. Can you two keep an eye on him while he's in school?"

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"Of course." Nicole held Zack's hand and grinned. "We're friends now."

Zack blushed from having his hand held by a girl.

"Cool. I'll get you some cakes later. What kind of cake would you like?"

"Ooh, chocolate for me. Nathan doesn't like cake, so..."

Alaric looked at Nathan in surprise. "You don't eat cakes, boy?"

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Nathan shook his head, and Alaric looked at him gently, then he patted his head. "What do you like? I can get you some on my way here at lunchtime."

"I-It's alright."

"He doesn't like cake, but he loves hamburger buns."

What? Alaric narrowed his eyes. First I've heard of that.

"Nicole!" Nathan quickly called out to his sister. "I don't like hamburger buns!"

Nicole looked at him innocently. "But you finish the buns every time we have burgers."

"Because you only eat the patty!" said Nathan solemnly. "Mommy said we should never

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waste food. I'm your brother. Since you can't finish your burgers, I have to help."

Ah, so that's the case. Alaric chuckled. He's being a good brother. Good boy.