

Departure with a Belly Chapter 266

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“I don’t need it.” Victoria muttered, “I don’t plan on having a love life.”

Her reply shocked Henry. “So, you don’t want to look for a man? You want to live alone?”

Victoria opened her eyes. “Yeah. Something like that.”

“Then, you’ve got to think it through. It’s quite a lonely life.”

Henry turned the steering wheel and the car merged into the main road as he spoke,

“Humans are social creatures after all. When you’re young, you have parents and friends who are also single. So, you may think that marriage wouldn’t make a significant difference in your life. But once you get older, you’ll start to yearn for someone who can accompany you when you don’t have friends, parents, and children with you.”

Victoria listened quietly and didn’t reply as she wasn’t alone. She had two babies.

“When I was young, I didn’t want to get married either. Why should I marry? Why do I need kids? I can live my life to the fullest alone too. If I got married, I would need to pay for my child until they go to college. But I realized that my quality of life changed once I have a wife and children after getting married. Of course, this is merely a personal choice. I like having a family. There are people who live well even if they are alone.”

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"Okay," Victoria answered him.

"You have to prepare yourself mentally whichever path you choose to take. You only live once and regret is painful."

"I know."

Henry sneaked a glance at Victoria before sighing, "Actually, I think that it'll be alright if you didn't want to get married. But you should definitely have a child. You're gorgeous, so your child will be beautiful too."

Victoria couldn't help but laugh at his words.

She didn't just have one child, she had twins.

She couldn't tell what other people thought of her children, but she genuinely loved them and found them beautiful and adorable.

"So, you're saying I don't need to consider marriage if I have children?"

Henry smiled, "Not exactly. If you find someone, you should. Since you're a great person

and the men surrounding you are all excellent. They're far from mediocre. You have

plenty of choices.”

Victoria pondered on it and realized that Bane did indeed treat her well.

“But that Mr. Morison... I still stand my ground. Think it through. He’s not suited for you.”

She furrowed her brows at his advice.

“You seem to have a strong dislike for him. Is it because the Cadogan Group invested in us, so you...”

“No.” Henry shook his head. “It has nothing to do with this. I’m only talking about what happened that day. Miss Selwyn, when I was pursuing my wife, I respected her a great deal. That hasn’t changed even after we got married. I assure you. I would never force her to like me if she didn’t. What good will it do to force her to be with me? Just to become bedmates?”

Victoria fell silent at his sharp remarks.

Yeah. Bedmates.

Bane did treat her well. If she were any other girl, she would have fallen for him in a

snap. But... it seemed that her heart was made of steel.

“But that Bane... He’s been forcing your hand from the start. So, from my point of view, I don’t think that’s gentlemanly of him. Of course, he is probably anxious to make things work. But ultimately, it’s your choice to make. I’m just giving you some advice based on my experiences.”

Victoria finally understood why Henry disliked Bane.

It was because Bane’s reaction did feel like he was forcing her the other day in the office. Even she felt it, let alone Henry who was watching on from the side.

Nevertheless, they tacitly changed the topic and casually chatted on the way to the company.

Victoria went right into her office and gave Fiona a call. Fiona immediately informed her that her children were still with her.

“Okay. I’ll come pick them up after work.”

Back in Gandra, Alaric had just returned to the company.

When he arrived, Terrance received a message asking him to pack and move their things to the branch office in Jasea.

He immediately caught on and went off to ensure that things went smoothly.

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Alaric sat down in the office with a hand on his stomach that was hurting. Due to his gastritis, his face was a little pale as he endured the pain.

It seemed that he was truly angered by Victoria's actions today.

He desperately needed to do something to distract him.

So, Alaric opened his phone and clicked into the app to see if the two children had any, new videos uploaded.

He entered and found a new video.

This was the best surprise for Alaric to calm himself by watching the adorable children.

He clicked into the video to find that they were playing in an arcade.

The video wasn't edited and was raw footage. So, the scenes were a little shaky.

Sometimes it focused on Nathan and would turn to, Nicole the next second.

Even though the scene was shaky, the contagious laughter of both children was loud and bright as it healed Alaric's tumultuous emotions and his lips slowly curved up into a smile.

He had to admit that they were both adorable. If he also had a pair of son and

Just as he was deep in his thoughts, Nicole suddenly turned around to look at the camera.

To be precise, she was looking at the person holding the camera.

"Miss Fiona, I want to eat cheese balls."

"Hmm? Cheese balls? Sure."

A young woman's voice replied to her. Then, the camera zoomed in to see a woman holding Nicole's hands and calling out for Nathan.

"Nathan, come here."

Then, her camera pointed forward as she led the two children to buy some cheese balls.

ww

It was a simple scene, but Nicole's mention of Miss Fiona made Alaric narrow his eyes.

He had a great memory. If he remembered correctly, he had heard of that name before.

He quickly searched for that name in his mind and finally recalled it.

Fiona Garza...

Isn't that the name of the woman pestering me in the bar?

Alaric exited the app and clicked on WhatsApp when he thought of that.

It had been a long time since he used this application.

When he entered, many messages popped up and they were all from the same person.

Her profile name was-Fiona here!

Isn't this the name Nicole called out in the video just now?

Now that he could compare both voices, he instantly realized that they even sounded similar.

Of course, Alaric ignored the pointless messages she sent him and clicked on her WhatsApp status to see a few pictures she posted.

He saw a familiar face inside and tried to zoom in. As expected, it was a picture of Fiona and the children together.

This woman was Victoria's friend, but why was she with the children?

Something flashed across Alaric's mind. It was fleeting, but he still caught onto it.

Suddenly, he narrowed his eyes as his gaze turned dark and dangerous.

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Today, Fiona didn't go to work and stayed home to babysit the kids, but the kids were very obedient and didn't need her to watch them at all times. She was only responsible for making sure that they didn't run around mindlessly or bump into any accidents.

During other times, she was busy with her own stuff.

Like now, she was browsing the latest items in fashion on her phone. While she was contemplating whether she should order it straight to the door or drag Victoria out for shopping, her phone vibrated at a new text notification. When she took a cursory look, she froze on the spot for a second. Although her body was rigid, her heart was racing rapidly.

Am I seeing things? Did I just see that
Mr. Cadogan has sent me a text? After the reality

slowly dawned on her, she quickly tapped into her WhatsApp, and sure enough, there was a new message at the very top. She was so excited that no words could describe her feeling right now, and even her eyes were burning as she tapped into the chatroom.

‘Miss Garza, may I know if it’s a good time to call you now?’ Alaric wrote.

He wants to call me? She had sent many texts to him and received no response from him, but now he replied and was asking to call her! All of a sudden, she had no idea what his motive was. Still, she was overjoyed that he was willing to contact her,

regardless of what his motive was.

At the thought of this, she hurriedly replied, ‘Now is a good time!’

In less than two seconds after she hit ‘send’, Alaric called her through WhatsApp.

Her heart raced even faster, and she sprang to her feet, saying loudly to the kids,

“Children, I’m going out to pick up a call. Play by yourselves, okay?” Then, she dashed to

the balcony without waiting for an answer from the kids. Then, she took a few deep

breaths and

calmed herself before picking up the call. “Hello, Mr. Cadogan,” she greeted

cautiously.

“Hello.” His voice was cold, just like the ice and the snowy mountains, but it sounded

firm at the same time. “I would like to find out some things from you. Is that okay?”

What does he want to find out from me? The next second, the scene in the restaurant

last time popped up in her mind. Is he going to ask me about Victoria again? she

wondered, biting her lower lip. Although she was reluctant, she couldn't stop herself from saying, "Sure. What would you like to know, Mr. Cadogan?"

"I accidentally saw the picture from your WhatsApp status."

"Picture?" For a moment, she didn't know which picture he was speaking about.

"Yes." His voice was husky and strong. "It's the picture you posted last night. I saw two children." The knuckle on his slender finger tapped on the smooth table softly as he casually asked, "Do you watch their live broadcast as well? Are you one of their fans?" When she heard this, she finally understood what he was speaking about and laughed jovially. "I see, you're talking about Nicole and Nathan! I do watch their live broadcast, but I'm not their fan."

Her last statement struck Alaric's heart like a sledgehammer, and he narrowed his almond-shaped eyes. "Oh, really?"

As he was asking about her picture with the kids instead of information on Victorian and even thought that she was a fan, Fiona let all her guard down, thinking that they'd found a common topic. "Mr. Cadogan, do you watch their live broadcast as well? That's such a coincidence."

Yeah." He lowered his gaze. "So, are you their mother?"

She was stunned by that assumption and hurriedly denied it, "That's impossible.

They're not my children. Why would I strike up a conversation with you if I already have

children?" To remove all doubts in his heart that she was already married with kids, she even sounded a little anxious in her explanation. "They're my friend's children. That woman you asked about the last time."

When she said that, a look of guilt flashed past her eyes. Don't blame me for this. She had always suspected that Victoria and Alaric knew each other before this. Otherwise, the latter wouldn't have acted this way. Now that she had the chance, she had to make Victoria's situation clear to him.

If he knows that Victoria already has children, he'll probably give up, won't he? In that case... Will my chances be higher?

Of course, this was the little bit of fluke she was hoping for. On the other hand, she didn't feel that she had done anything wrong. After all, Victoria had given birth to two children, and they were already a few years old. There was nothing to hide, and she was merely telling the truth.

Alaric already had a rough idea in his mind, and his brows shot up. "Oh, are they Miss Selwyn's children?"

"Yes." She nodded. "They're her children." After she finished speaking, all she received in reply was a long moment of silence. When she didn't hear anything from him for almost a minute, she said, "Hello, Mr. Cadogan?"

From the other end, he chuckled softly. "Your friend is quite fortunate."

Fiona agreed awkwardly, saying, "Yeah, I think so as well. Her kids are very adorable and

obedient.”

She wanted to continue talking to him, but she heard a door opening from his side followed by someone greeting him, “Mr. Cadogan.”

Alaric raised his hand before saying into the phone, “Miss Garza, thank you for your information today, but I have matters to attend to now.”

“Okay, I got it. Go ahead with your work.”

After Alaric hung up, he slipped into deep thought while rubbing his phone between his fingers. “Mr. Cadogan?” He only snapped back to his senses when Terrance called out to him. Unfortunately, Terrance only received a frown of disgruntlement for his efforts. So, it was a speechless Terrance that was left wondering why Alaric was displeased yet again when he was fine just a second ago.

Before he could mull over the possibilities, Alaric ordered coldly, “Come here.”

“What’s the matter, Mr. Cadogan?”

He walked over to Alaric, who pursed his lips and showed him a picture of two kids.

“Take a look.”

Hence, he leaned in to take a look, and when he saw that it was those two kids, he

couldn't help but say, "Aren't they the kids that you're usually watching? What's wrong?"

Who's the woman in the picture?"

"Victoria's friend."

"Friend? Vic... Miss Selwyn?" Terrance's eyes grew to the size of golf balls. "Mr.

Cadogan, are you saying that these kids are the kids of Miss Selwyn's friend? That's such a coincidence!"

"Is it?" Alaric snorted in laughter at his words. "Then, if I tell you that these two kids are Victoria's children, will you think that it's a bigger coincidence?"

"Yes, of course." Terrance nodded in agreement when he suddenly noticed something and jerked his head to Alaric with utter disbelief in his eyes. "M—Mr. Cadogan, what did you just say?" Did I hear him correctly? Did I just hear him saying that those are Miss Selwyn's children?

"Is M—Miss Selwyn a mother now? And her children are already in

kindergarten! Then... you don't have a chance anymore, Mr. Cadogan." The first thought

that came into Terrance's mind was, Alaric had been suffering for nothing all these years!

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"No chance?" Alaric chuckled softly. "Why do you think that I don't have a chance?"

When Terrance learned that Victoria had children who were already a few years old, he felt sorry for Alaric and said with a dejected look on his face, "Mr. Cadogan, her children

are already toddlers, that goes to show that they have a father. If you continue down this road, you may end up as a homewrecker in the future. Do you really want your reputation to develop in that direction?"

Alaric swept his gaze over him, as though he was looking at a ret ard, and Terrance couldn't help but wonder what he said wrong.

"Do you remember what you said before?"

"What did I say? Will you please explain everything?" The way Alaric spoke was wearing

down Terrance's patience, and he had no idea what he was trying to say, so he sounded

a little impatient. But right after that, he started to regret it. Even if I'm impatient, I shouldn't have used this tone with him. Just when he wanted to apologize to Alaric, he realized that Alaric wasn't mad at all and seemed to be in a rather good mood.

"Have some patience and look at the picture again." Once again, Alaric showed him the picture.

Terrance frowned as he decided to look at the picture carefully despite the confusion in his heart but couldn't find anything extraordinary about it. In the end, he asked, "Ar Cadogan, I've been staring at the picture with the utmost focus that I swear that if I'm capable of drilling holes into it, you'll have a broken phone. What's the problem with it? Aren't they just Miss Selwyn's kids?"

A speechless Alaric looked at him doubtfully, wondering, Why does his brain suddenly stop working at this time? When nothing was happening before this, he could come up with all sorts of nonsensical ideas, but now that something has truly happened, he couldn't think of anything at all. With this thought in mind, he prompted him in annoyance, "Take a closer look at the children's features."

Their features? Following his order, Terrance took a look again and said, "In all honesty, these kids have handsome features, and they look very similar to each other, but their temperaments are different. The girl is pretty, and the boy is also good-looking. It's just that..."

Alaric watched in resignation as Terrance deliberated the matter while scratching his chin. Frankly, it made him speechless that Terrance was still missing the point after saying everything yet nothing. "Just what?"

"It's just that these kids don't look like Miss Selwyn. Instead, they look a little like-"

Then, he abruptly trailed off mid-sentence, paused for a few seconds, and turned to

Alaric in astonishment. Then, he checked the two kids again to confirm his suspicion, and after checking a few times consecutively, he gulped, "Y-You,"

“Yes.” Alaric calmly looked at him and said in a steady voice, “Finish your sentence earlier. Whom do they look like?”

By now, Terrance had already cursed a few times silently in disbelief, but after he had this idea in his mind, they really did resemble Alaric. Especially the little boy in the picture, who looked like an exact copy of Alaric. He did mention something about it in the past, but he hadn't really thought anything of it at the time. After all, who would have thought that Alaric already had children? But now, these are Miss Selwyn's kids and they're already so big. Maybe...

“Speak,” Alaric urged with a frown.

After a few seconds in silence, Terrance said firmly, “They look like you, Mr. Cadogan, they really do. I've mentioned that these kids resemble you a little, but I wasn't really thinking at that time. Now... If these kids are related to you, that means, five years ago, Miss Selwyn was already...”

This was the question Alaric was thinking about as well. “Mr. Cadogan, you... didn't know about it?” The way Terrance looked at Alaric had changed, like he had so many things to say but couldn't.

Alaric pursed his lips, and his eyes were dark. He, too, wanted to know why he had no idea about this. "Pack up. We're going to Jasea."

Terrance nodded. "We're all packed. When are we going?"

"Right now," Alaric answered with a serious look. Before he boarded the flight, he said to Terrance, "Send someone to find out where the kids are and how they're doing now. I want it in detail."

"Okay, Mr. Cadogan. I'll make the necessary arrangements now."

When they were on the flight, Alaric kept looking out the window, but he couldn't see anything. Who would have thought that Nicole and Nathan could be his children? That explained why they always seemed special to him. So, this was the reason! Now that he was sure that they were his children, all the pain and unease had seemingly disappeared.

Terrance had a laptop on his lap as he took a seat next to him and whispered, "Mr. Cadogan, I've sent someone to investigate the matter. We'll receive the information tonight or tomorrow the latest."

"Okay."

Terrance stole a look at Alaric before looking away. Until now, he was still in shock
100%

because he never imagined that things would take such a dramatic turn. Those two
kids may be Mr. Cadogan's children...

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Before this, he had been wondering why the usually aloof Alaric liked watching the live
broadcast of two kids without reason. He had even spent a considerable sum on the
channel. As it turned out, The Universe was leading their paths toward certain things,
and Fate would always bind those who were fated without them realizing.

Although they still didn't know the results of the investigations, judging from the similar
features, Terrance reckoned that the chances of their assumptions coming true were
very high. All we have to do now is wait for the results.

After work, Victoria left her office and went to Fiona's place to pick up her kids. The
place she went to was the quaint place, where Fiona was still living.

Fiona didn't really feel as though anything was off, but when Victoria stepped into the
living room, she recalled the scene when she chased Victoria away and felt incredibly
remorseful. So, she apologized to Victoria when she got close, saying guiltily, "I'm sorry

about what happened last time.”

Victoria’s first reaction was surprise. However, the very next second, she said lightly, “It’s not a big deal.” She had already let the matter slide, so it really wasn’t a big deal. “I really don’t know if I had lost my mind at the time. How could I tell you to leave because of this? I rented this place because you’re back, but I didn’t imagine that I’d actually... I’m sorry.” Fiona’s eyes welled up with tears as she spoke, and she dashed to Victoria and hugged her. “I’m really sorry.”

This scene was hidden from the kids in the room, and Victoria returned her hug, patting her gently on her back. “Never mind. If I’m truly upset with you, do you think I’ll bring the kids along to look for you? The fact that I came looking for you means that I never once took your words to heart.”

“It’s precisely because you came looking that made me feel so guilty. You cherish this friendship, but I destroyed it so easily.”

“No, you didn’t.” Victoria chuckled softly. “Even if you don’t want to be friends with me any longer, I still do. So, don’t worry about it anymore, okay?”

Fiona laid her head on Victoria's shoulder and sniffled a few times before pulling away with reddened eyes and was filled with even more regret when she recalled the call she had with Alaric today.

She wanted to make things clear to Victoria, but she swallowed back the words before they managed to fall from her lips. Forget it. Judging from how she is, I don't think she'll mind it.

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After Fiona thought it over, she decided to end the topic and asked Victoria about the problem with her accommodation, "I'm staying at the place where Bane had prepared before this. Of course, I paid rent."

She added the last comment because she was worried that Fiona would get the wrong idea. Sure enough, the news surprised Fiona. "Rent? Will he accept rent from you?"
"If he doesn't accept it, then I won't stay there."

Fiona blinked at her in shock for a second before giggling as she replied, "I have to hand it to you. There's nothing he can do about it except to accept your rent." Victoria merely smiled and commented nothing more. "But aren't you a little too guarded against him? He's really nice to you. Won't you consider giving him a chance?"

“Fiona, it’s precisely because he’s so nice to me that I can’t be with him. Otherwise, I’ll only hurt him instead of bringing him happiness.”

Fiona scratched her head. “Well, I don’t get what’s going on between the both of you, but it’s fine as long as you made the decision yourself.”

Time passed while they had small talk. Since it was getting rather late, Victoria left with

the kids. Before she departed, Fiona asked, “Do you need me to babysit again tomorrow?”

“It’s alright. I’m done with my stuff, and I can watch them myself. If you miss them, come over for a visit whenever you’re free.”

“Sure, I’ll drop by for a visit when I’m free. Take care on your way home.”

“Say goodbye to Miss Fiona, kids.”

Then, Victoria left with her children, and the latter went for their shower after they reached home, leaving her with some time to take a seat and check the videos of their outing with Fiona.

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Fiona had made a few videos, and Victoria watched each of them on the couch quietly. Finally, she thought one of them wasn’t bad and wanted to upload it on TikTok, but

when she opened the app, she saw that there was already a new upload on her account. That was when she realized that it was probably Fiona who updated her post using her account.

When she tapped in to have a look at the video, she saw that it was the video of the kids playing. Halfway through the video, Victoria's heart skipped a beat when Nicole called Fiona 'Miss Fiona'.

The way Nicole called Fiona... I guess no one will realize it, will they? A person who's as

busy as him probably won't browse through something like TikTok, Victoria thought, feeling more assured by the second,

After she took a closer look, she saw that there were already more than tens of thousands of comments. Judging from the situation, it was inappropriate to delete the video now, so she decided to just leave it.

That evening, Alaric arrived in Jasea. Before the flight landed, he looked over the city through the window. The city was sparkling with lights at night like the stars lighting up the sky. This was another incredibly advanced city.

After they landed, Terrance dragged the luggage, following closely behind Alaric. "Mr. Cadogan, I've received the information and it's sent to me already."

Alaric stopped in his tracks upon hearing the news. "Forward it to me."

"Should I organize it first?"

Alaric turned him down, saying dispassionately, "There's no need. Send it to me directly."

"You got it, Mr. Cadogan."

This was the first time Terrance was sending him content that was never edited prior to this, but he didn't feel guilty at all, and neither was he worried that Alaric would reprimand him when he couldn't spot the main points. Terrance had a good grasp of Alaric's temper after all these years of working for him. Honestly, he knew Alaric's temper like the back of his hand, and right now, he reckoned that Alaric was in a rather good mood.

Sure enough, Alaric opened the document and started reading when he hopped into the car. Terrance would occasionally sneak a look at Alaric along the way, but the man was so engrossed that he didn't have the interest to care about this nor reprimand

Terrance for his rudeness.

When they arrived at the hotel, Alaric had yet to finish reading the information, but he kept away his phone and said in a low voice, "Check the location of this school."

Then, he mentioned the name of a school and Terrance immediately searched for it on the map. "I found it. It's close to Miss Selwyn's working place."

When Alaric leaned over for a look, Terrance immediately pointed at the map.

"This is

where she has been working, and the school is located over here."

Alaric looked at the map on the phone and was immediately reminded of the children's adorable faces and how they resembled him. So, he went silent for a few minutes before looking away. "We're going upstairs."

The next day when Victoria brought the children to school, she didn't notice that a car was parked near the gates of the school. If she had taken a good look around the school, she would have seen that the windows and the chassis of the car were all black.

As many cars were dropping off children, she didn't even notice their existence and watched her children walk to the school gates before saying goodbye to her.

As she had plenty of experience sending her kids off to school, she habitually crouched down and felt two kisses on her cheeks. "Goodbye, Mommy."

“Hurry and go in.” She shoved their small school bags gently, pushing them into the school, and waited until they were inside before standing up and leaving.

When she passed by the black sedan, she suddenly felt something and stopped in her tracks, looking in the direction of the black sedan but couldn't see anything. There seemed nothing odd with it under the bright sun, and it was merely parked here. She

pursed her red lips together as she thought, Am I imagining things?

Just a second ago when she walked past, she could feel someone watching her from inside the vehicle, but everything seemed normal now. My kids... They should be safe, right? Well, they should be safe because they're in school, she thought firmly and left very quickly after coming to a rational conclusion.

After she had left the spot, the window of the black sedan rolled down and revealed a handsome face behind it. Then, he stared at the street where she had just left with deep, steady eyes as he pursed his lips tightly.

On the driver's seat, Terrance couldn't help but sigh. "Miss Selwyn is such an alert person. We're just sitting here but it seems like she could sense us. Thankfully she didn't notice us, but... Mr. Cadogan, why are you afraid of letting her find out?"

Alaric's eyes drifted over him, looking at him as though he was an idiot again. "If she finds out about me, will I still get to see the kids?"

With that, Terrance instantly understood the situation. "You're right. If the children are yours and she kept them from you, it means that she didn't want you to find out about them. But if she knows that you've found out about them, she'll probably disappear with the kids the first chance she gets. We can't let that happen."

Right after he finished speaking, Alaric opened the car door and stepped out, and

Terrance followed after him upon seeing that. Alaric with his good-looking features also had a big, tall frame that carried an invisible, oppressive air about him, making heads turn.

Just when he was about to enter the school, he was stopped by the security officer at

the gates. "Excuse me, may I ask who you are?"

Terrance hastily went forward to show his work ID. "I'm Levane and I have an appointment with the school principal to take a look at the school today."

The security officer took a look at his work ID, checked the memo handed to him this morning by the management, and let them in after confirming their identities.

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The school principal, Greg Bacher, came out personally to welcome Alaric. In fact, he was shocked to find out that Alaric wanted to visit their kindergarten.

Although he was

aware that Alaric was a successful businessman, it was astonishing to him that he would like to check out the environment of the school because he had never heard that Alaric was married or had children.

When he voiced his doubts, his wife said, "Why do you care whether he has children or not? Maybe he's just prepping for the future. You know, the rich are always planning ahead in everything. Don't read too much into this when he's just here for a visit. Just do what you're supposed to do, and it will be fine."

After Greg listened to his wife's advice, he greeted Alaric with a smiling face and led him to walk around the school compound. "The environment of our school is not bad. If you have kids in the future, you can consider sending them to school here, Mr.

Cadogan.”

Sadly, no matter what he said, Alaric’s face remained stoic and didn’t show any reaction

at all. Greg stared at his expressionless face and wondered worriedly, Is he unhappy with the school? Next to them, Terrance, who knew that Alaric wasn’t here to check out the school nor was he interested in the surroundings, stepped forward and said, “Mr. Bacher, the environment looks very good, but we wonder how the teaching atmosphere is. May we take a look in the classrooms?”

“Sure!” Greg nodded. “Of course, come with me.” He led them toward the classrooms, but it was not yet time for classes; many kids had just arrived, and some classes were missing some of their students. “Now is the free activity time for the kids, but we have a few teachers watching over them to assure that there’s no accident during this time.”

When they entered the first classroom, Alaric looked around the room but didn’t find familiar faces. Then, he turned his gaze away, and Terrance immediately knew what he had to do next. “May we go to the next class?”

“Of course, you can. Let’s go.” Because he was the principal, he could lead anyone to any place in the school. Along the way, some kids recognized and greeted him in all sorts of baby voices.

“Hello, Mr. Principal.”

“Good morning, Mr, Bacher.”

Just like that, Greg returned everyone’s greeting awkwardly in Alaric’s presence, and after visiting a few classrooms, Alaric still didn’t find the kids he wanted to see. A frown slowly appeared on his face as he thought, I saw them coming in when I was in the car, but why can’t I find them now? Where the hell did they go?

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While he was pondering over this, he suddenly caught sight of two familiar figures sitting in a corner and playing with something. Their heads were put together as they looked at something in their hands.

Alaric stopped, staring at the kids in a daze, and whether it was his gaze or feet, he couldn’t move them a single bit.

Meanwhile, Terrance and Greg followed his gaze. When Greg saw that he was looking at Nicole and Nathan, he smiled. “Mr. Cadogan, those two kids are very adorable, aren’t they? Do you know that they’re really popular on the Internet? They have a live broadcast room with a lot of viewers and their viewership is comparable to a celebrity.

wife and kids like to watch their live broadcast.”

At the mention of this, Greg suddenly remembered that he was next to his wife when she was watching their live broadcast. While they were watching the broadcast, something popped up in his wife’s mind and she passed the phone to him. “Old man, look. Doesn’t this kid look like Mr. Cadogan from the Cadogan Group?”

Her words piqued his interest, and he took a look. Before she brought this up, he hadn’t really thought anything of it, but after she did, he thought that the features were very similar. “They do look alike.”

“Could they be his illegitimate children?”

“That’s nonsense. Why would he have illegitimate children when he’s not even married yet?”

“Yeah, but I remember there was a rumor before this going around that someone put their children through plastic surgery in an attempt to pass off as a Cadogan. Even that attempt was a failure, not to mention that it’s common to have similar-looking people in this world. Maybe they’re not related at all.”

As Greg listened to his wife blabbering, he took another look at the screen and thought, This is different from plastic surgery. They really look alike.

Still, there was no way he could say this out loud in Alaric’s presence. Besides, the fact

that Alaric was staring at the kids without moving an inch was probably because he thought the same, too.

Alaric's gaze never wavered from the two kids as he started toward them.

"Mr. Cadogan-"

Seeing that, Greg wanted to go after him but was stopped by Terrance. "Mr. Bacher, he just wants to say hello to the kids because he finds them adorable. Is that not allowed?"

"But..." Dilemma washed over Greg's face. "This isn't in line with the school's regulations

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because he's a stranger to the children."

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"You're wrong about that," Terrance corrected. "He's not a stranger to them."

Right after the words left his lips, Alaric had come to a stop in front of the kids. In the midst of playing, Nicole raised her head, and her eyes lit up when she saw that it was Alaric who approached them. "You're Mr. Good Looks!" she exclaimed and tugged Nathan's sleeve. "Nathan, he's the handsome man on the plane that I told you about last time."

Nathan lifted his head and met Alaric's eyes when he heard his sister gushing. It only

took him just one look to recognize that Alaric was the one who helped him with the door at the airport. At that time, he was on the phone, but he still helped him out. After he paused for a few seconds, he greeted, "Hello, sir."

Alaric merely stood rooted on the spot, watching the children silently. For some unknown reason, maybe it was because this was the first time he was seeing them in the flesh in front of him instead of through the screen, they felt so real to him. Their features, breathing, and voice were so close, which made him feel like he was stepping on clouds, swaying shakily. Although they were real, it seemed like an illusion. While he was immersed in such thoughts, he slowly crouched down, and his eyes stopped for a few seconds on Nathan's face before turning to Nicole.

Perhaps Nicole was surprised that he wasn't speaking and didn't reply to her, she tilted her head with unblinking eyes. "Mr. Good Looks?"

Alaric immediately snapped back to his senses as he reached out and placed his hand gently on her head. "Yeah?" he answered softly.

Nearby, Terrance pointed at the scene and said with a smile, "Look, Mr. Bacher. I told you that he's not a stranger to them. They know each other." And he's their father, at that, he added silently. Of course, he wouldn't say this before any result was available.

A stunned Greg watched the scene unfold before his eyes. "Do they know each other?"

I can't believe that they know each other, he thought, recalling the things his wife had mentioned. It definitely didn't help that the more he looked at Alaric and the twins, the

more they resembled the man.