

Chapter 551 Leonel, We're Over A Long Time Ago

Laura, hearing Edwin's words, felt a hint of relief.

She asked with a tinge of worry, "What about Alexis and Leonel?"

"They won't reunite," Edwin replied, his voice lacking emotion.

Laura had more questions, but hesitated to voice them. She returned home with Edwin, her mind swirling with thoughts. Thankfully, her child's presence offered a welcome distraction, preventing her from delving deeper into the matter.

Leonel, meanwhile, cherished a photograph.

He had ordered a special crystal frame for it, placing it prominently at his bedside. Day and night, he gazed at the picture, his admiration evident.

The child in the photo, his daughter, looked so sweet and delicate.

She seemed a bit underweight though.

Could it be a lack of proper nutrition?

Worried, Leonel made a call to that same number he had been trying for three years, and like each and every time during the past three years, no one picked up.

Leonel's face remained impassive.

His hand fell slowly, mirroring the countless times he had tried to reach Alexis over the years.

Gently stroking the image of his daughter, he felt his longing and thoughts almost turn to resentment towards Alexis.

Just then, his phone, lying on the bed, rang.

His secretary was on the other end, barely containing her excitement. "Mr. Douglas, we've got news about Miss Fowler. She's flying from Braseovell to Duefron in a week."

Leonel was silent, motionless.

The secretary sensed his unease.

After a long pause, Leonel finally spoke up, his voice raspy. "I understand."

It took half an hour after the call ended for him to regain his composure fully.

Alexis was really returning.

She and their daughter Evelyn would soon be back. Excited, Leonel started shopping for gifts. He imagined a two-year-old would adore cute, plush animals.

Pondering whether to get a cat or a dog for Evelyn, he researched extensively and consulted his female colleagues with children. Ultimately, he chose a 2-month-old spotted dog, naming it Ollie.

He planned to present it to Evelyn.

Then he thought, perhaps it would be better to keep it at his villa. There, Evelyn could play with the puppy on the lawn. The thought of such moments kept Leonel awake for several nights.

A week later, at Duefron's international airport.

Alexis arrived on a regular flight, not a private one. After disembarking, her daughter Evelyn, who was two and a half, whispered a request to visit the restroom. So, Alexis accompanied her, waiting outside as Evelyn went in by herself.

At two and a half years old, Evelyn could manage the restroom by herself. Alexis waited for her outside.

Soon enough, Evelyn emerged, having zipped up her pants.

The washbasin, however, was too high for her.

Alexis lifted her up, showing Evelyn how to wash her hands properly.

The little girl caught on quickly.

Alexis smiled warmly, gently kissing Evelyn. "Good girl," she praised.

Evelyn responded with a giggle.

As Alexis looked up, about to set Evelyn down, her gaze caught in the

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mirror.

Leonel was there.

He was in a formal suit, as if he'd come straight from work.

He appeared thinner than before.

But he still had that mature, charming air typical of a man in his prime.

His eyes met Alexis' in the mirror.

Alexis didn't feign ignorance. She offered a small smile. "What a coincidence," she remarked, and then quickly averted her gaze.

After a moment, Leonel spoke, his voice rough. "It's not a coincidence. I came to pick you up."

His eyes then shifted to Evelyn.

The little girl looked back at him, her expression one of timid unfamiliarity.

Sensing her discomfort, Alexis wrapped an arm around her and suggested softly, "Say hello to Mr. Douglas."

"Mr. Douglas," Evelyn greeted him, her manners impeccable.

Leonel's expression faltered.

Alexis was introducing him as Mr. Douglas.

Despite their past misunderstandings and her three-year absence, did she not acknowledge him as Evelyn's father?

Yet, with Evelyn present, a confrontation was out of the question. He managed a gentle tone. "The car's outside. Let's go."

Alexis didn't budge, just lightly held Evelyn.

Leonel walked ahead, but realizing they weren't following, turned back.

Alexis faced him, her voice soft yet firm. "I'm not coming with you."

Leonel's lips tightened, a hint of age in his stern expression.

Indifferent, Alexis continued, "Leonel, there's no need. What we had is over."

Leonel fought to keep his emotions in check. "Do you understand what

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you're saying, Alexis?"

Alexis, mindful of Evelyn's presence, was hesitant to engage further.

Just then, a slender figure approached. "Why the delay? The driver's waiting," he inquired gently.

That was when he noticed the presence of another man.

Upon seeing Leonel, Calvin was momentarily surprised before his face lit up with recognition.

"Mr. Douglas," he greeted, his demeanor calm as if meeting an old friend after a long time. The interaction seemed ordinary, but for Leonel, it was a shock.

Had Calvin been with Alexis all this time?

During the three years Leonel searched for her, had Calvin taken his place in Alexis' life?

Leonel tried not to dwell on these thoughts. However, watching Calvin effortlessly lift Evelyn onto his shoulder, where she lay contentedly, stirred something in him.

Calvin's affectionate kiss on Evelyn's head elicited a giggle from her.

Leonel's eyes widened, his gaze fixed on Alexis. "You and him..."

Calvin remained silent.

Alexis spoke up, her voice clear. "I've been with him for the past three years."

Leonel staggered back, bumping into the washbasin.

Pain shot through him, but it was his forced, pained smile that seemed more unbearable. "I don't believe it. Alexis, don't you love me? How could you be with him?"

Alexis asked Calvin to leave with Evelyn first.

The little girl looked back, her face filled with confusion.

Once they were gone, Alexis' tone was distant and matter-of-fact. "Mr. Douglas, who I choose to be with isn't your concern. I'm telling you this so you'll understand. Please, stay out of my life from now on."

Leonel could only stare.

"I don't want Calvin to misunderstand," Alexis continued calmly. "We're very close."

She walked past Leonel, who seemed lost for words. As she passed, he reached out, grasping her wrist.

Leonel's voice was rough, filled with desperation. "Alexis, I've waited three years for you. Everyone deserves a chance to defend themselves, right?"

Leonel's mind wasn't on Calvin or his relationship with Alexis.

His sole focus now was on getting back what he had lost.

Alexis looked at Leonel's hand on her wrist, her smile soft yet sad. "There's nothing to explain. I find you... questionable."

With that, she pulled away, leaving without another word.

Leonel watched her leave, swallowing hard, but he didn't follow.

His secretary approached, breaking the silence.

Her face alight with excitement, the secretary announced, "Mr. Douglas, the puppy is waiting in the car. Your daughter will be thrilled to see it."

Leonel, turning away, gripped the wash basin. His voice was bitter.

"Take the puppy back to the villa. I need some time alone."

The secretary, taken aback, didn't dare to question him.

Once alone in the bathroom, Leonel raised his eyes to his reflection in the mirror. His expression was dark.

He had never put much stock in genetics, but now, he wondered if he was inherently as horrible a man as his father, doomed to a similar fate of separation from his wife and child.

His phone vibrated in his pocket. Pulling it out, he saw the caller was Darwin, the one he had anticipated.

Darwin sounded both weary and relieved.

"Heard you went to pick her up today.

Got turned down, didn't you?

And Calvin's with her, right? I'm sorry, Leonel. I should've told you sooner.

Leonel's response was scornful. "Darwin... The Larson family's bankruptcy clearly hasn't stopped you from fantasizing."

Darwin's laugh was bitter. "I'm beyond daydreaming. She never loved me, so I lost nothing. But you, Leonel, you had her love and still lost her. Who's truly more miserable here?"

His laughter was harsh and mocking.

Leonel ended the call abruptly.

He quickly dialed another number, instructing his men to keep up the pressure on Darwin. Leonel was determined that Darwin, in his financial ruin, wouldn't have the last laugh.

In a move of calculated cruelty, Leonel had once arranged for Serenity to be with Darwin, under the influence of alcohol.

Now, Serenity stayed with Darwin, who toiled as a laborer to support her. Their life was a struggle.

Marcus had called Leonel mad.

Leonel couldn't deny it. His obsession with Alexis had driven him to the edge of sanity.

But Alexis wouldn't return to him.

Now finally back, she showed no intention of reuniting with Leonel, instead choosing to be with Calvin and allowing Evelyn to grow close to him almost as if he had been her real father.

In a fit of rage, Leonel swept the items on the wash basin to the floor.

A janitor approached, drawn by the noise.

Leonel hastily wrote a check, placing it on the basin. "This is for the trouble," he muttered.

After he left, the janitor picked up the check, astonished at the amount.

One million dollars.

She couldn't help but mutter, "Rich people are all mad."

In a black limousine, Evelyn rested on Calvin's lap, her head tilted in sleep. Calvin gently stroked her soft locks, and then turned to Alexis.

Alexis had been silent since entering the car.

Calvin smiled slightly. "Does seeing Leonel still affect you?"

Alexis met his gaze and shook her head. "How could it?"

Calvin looked down at Evelyn's peaceful face, his voice softer as he kissed her forehead. "I worry you might waver. They say a man leaves a lasting mark on a woman. I fear for you, Alexis. That you might not emerge unscathed."

"I won't let that happen," Alexis affirmed, gazing at Evelyn. "I wouldn't even have come back and met him again, if it weren't for Evelyn's sake."

Calvin remained silent, covering Evelyn with a blanket and patting her back gently.

As she snuggled against him, his heart filled with both sorrow and regret. He wished for more time, to see Evelyn grow up, become a beautiful woman, and perhaps even marry.

Above all, Calvin wished for Alexis' happiness.

Regardless of who she chose, he hoped it wouldn't be Leonel, believing Leonel unworthy of her.

Throughout the journey, Alexis stayed quiet. As they neared the villa, a message flashed on her phone.

"I won't give up."

After a brief glance, Alexis put the phone away. Calvin asked, his voice even, "Leonel?"

"Yes," she replied.

Calvin's heart ached at the thought of what lay ahead, but the sight of Evelyn in his arms stilled his urge to dissuade Alexis.

An hours later, they arrived at a villa in the same neighborhood as the one Leonel had prepared.

Their cars entered the gate, one after the other, and coincidentally

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crossed paths.

Leonel's car came to a gradual stop ahead of Alexis'. He exited his vehicle, closed the door, and approached her car.

As Alexis rolled down her window, she addressed him directly. "Mr. Douglas, you're blocking my path."