

# Secret Admiration Finding True Love After Prison

## Chapter 251 – 260

Chapter 251 The Recorder

Upon hearing this, Malcolm began to stammer.

1/5

Anne mocked, “Some people shouldn’t act like they’re wise due to their age, claiming to be a father while failing to fulfill even one day of a father’s responsibility.

“Mr. Stone, whenever Lydia cries, you turn to scold Meryl. Which one of them is your daughter? Or is Lydia actually your mistress, so you take special care of her?”

Malcolm glared fiercely at Anne. “You’re talking nonsense. Shut the fuck up.”

Dante looked at Malcolm. “Watch your words.”

Malcolm thought, “What bad luck! I can’t afford to offend any of these people.”

Bianca, feeling displeased, interjected, “Alright, Lydia, wipe your tears, and don’t hide in your dad’s arms. You’re a grown woman. You should know the difference in gender and don’t let people gossip.”

Anne’s words reminded Bianca.

She thought, “Although I watched Lydia grow up, she has no blood relation to Malcolm.

Chapter 251 The Recorder

2/5

Even a biological daughter keeps her distance from her father as she grows up, let alone an adopted daughter.

It’s natural for a father to dote on his daughter, but Malcolm is

too kind to Lydia.”

Bianca had seen them hiding from her more than once, whispering secretively.

Once the seed of suspicion was planted, it began to sprout wildly in her mind.

Before, Bianca only felt that they had a good father–daughter relationship, but the more she thought about it, the more strange it seemed.

Lydia was stunned, thinking, “Is it wrong for Malcolm to help me wipe my tears?”

Fearing that Dalton would misunderstand, she cautiously glanced at him.

However, Dalton stood there, his gaze uncertain

*and* lost in

thought.

Meryl looked coldly at the farce unfolding before her. “Lydia, what reason do I have for pushing you?”

Lydia began to fabricate stories, trying her best to make Meryl appear despicable in everyone’s eyes.

“You married Chandler, but you don’t want to give up on Dalton.

Chapter 251 The Recorder

3/5

You think I’m obstructing your plans by being near Dalton, and on top of that, I took away our parents’ love, so you want me dead.”

As soon as those words left her mouth, everyone’s expressions changed.

Lydia’s accusations offended everyone on Meryl’s behalf.

“That’s utter nonsense.”

After saying this, Meryl slowly pulled a recorder out of her pocket.

She said calmly, “Actually, I recorded everything that happened yesterday.”

Lydia was taken aback, her eyes fixed on the recorder.

“How could Meryl carry a recorder with her?”

Now that recorders can also have video functions, wouldn’t that mean everything about the incident was captured on camera?”

“Lydia, are you scared?”

Meryl looked at her and sneered, "If you beg me nicely now, I might consider..."

Before she could finish, Dalton, who had been silent, suddenly walked over and took the recorder from Meryl's hand.

#### Chapter 251 The Recorder

Chandler narrowed his eyes, thinking Dalton was going to destroy the evidence.

4/5

Just as Chandler was about to snatch the recorder back, Dalton pressed the play button instead.

"Meryl, you married Chandler, so give Dalton back to me, okay?"

"Why did you come back from prison? Why did you come home? If it weren't for you, I would be our parents' only daughter, and Dalton would be mine.

"Meryl, Dalton is mine, and Mom and Dad's love is also mine. Do you think you've won? No, I won't let you take what belongs to me."

Last night, their conversation in the stairwell was all recorded.

Ven

The high-definition camera captured every one of Lydia's expressions clearly.

In the final moment, Lydia glanced in a certain direction.

Then, she deliberately pretended to be pushed by Meryl and rolled down the stairs, but Meryl hadn't even touched her.

The entire course of events was now crystal clear. The small recorder laid everything out for everyone to see.

And it seemed that Meryl was trying to pull Lydia back up, due to her momentum, she got pulled down **the** stairs instead.

but

#### Chapter 251 The Recorder

Lydia's heart sank, and her face turned pale.

5/5

“Damn it. Lydia, you really have no shame.” Anne glared at Lydia and cursed, “You framed Meryl, and she was still trying to save you. How could you so ruthlessly throw dirt on her? You’re truly malicious.”

Write your comment

Chapter 252 Misunderstanding

Meryl was seeing the surveillance video for the first time as well.

To her surprise, from the angle of the footage, it appeared as if she was trying to save Lydia, only to accidentally be dragged down with Lydia.

What a misunderstanding.

This conveniently spared her from having to explain further.

The evidence was right there, clearly showing that Meryl was innocent and that Lydia had framed her.

Lydia had deliberately fallen down the stairs and then cried foul, framing Meryl for pushing her.

But the reality was that Meryl hadn’t touched her at all and had instinctively tried to help her when the incident first happened.

Malcolm, who had once trusted Lydia completely, now looked at her with a mixture of disappointment and shock.

Bianca, too, seemed as if she no longer recognized her daughter.

She couldn’t believe the sweet, innocent girl she had raised turn out to be like this.

Bianca thought, “Lydia jumped down the stairs without

Chapter 252 Misunderstanding

**3/4**

Her plan had seemed foolproof—something that could have destroyed Meryl the same **way it** had three years ago. She didn’t understand how it all came down to a recording device.

Lydia's frustration was palpable.

With Dalton remaining silent, Lydia clung to a sliver of hope.

She thought, "Maybe Dalton believes me and is waiting for me to explain. If I can just clear this up..."

Her voice trembled with emotion. "There's something wrong with this video. That's not what really happened... It must have been edited. Meryl definitely pushed me; she must have cut out that part."

Anne looked at her as if she were a fool. "Since yesterday, Meryl has been unconscious in the hospital. I've been here all along. How could she possibly do that?"

In her desperation, Lydia raised her voice.  
"You're her friend; of course, you're going to side

going to side with her! Maybe you two conspired together to have **edit** it just to frame me!"

omeo

At this point, Lydia was even trying to drag Anne into her mess.

Dante said with a darkened face, "Anne will never do shady things like that. So, don't drag her into this."

Dante was defending Anne, but she wasn't interested in accepting his help. "You know me well, Mr. Paltrow, but please don't meddle where you're not needed, okay?"

Chapter 252 Misunderstanding

4/4

Dante thought, "Is Anne deliberately distancing herself from me in front of everyone, calling me 'Mr. Paltrow' like that?"

Write **your** comment

Chapter 253 Biased

**But** Dante merely lowered his gaze and said nothing.

Chandler glanced at Lydia and said slowly, "I was here last night loo, Lydia. Are you suggesting that I also helped my wife with the video editing?"

Meryl was taken aback, thinking, “Chandler stayed with me **all** night? With how busy he is...”

She looked at Chandler more closely. Indeed, he was still in the same clothes from yesterday, and his eyes held a barely perceptible hint of fatigue.

She felt a warm sense of appreciation.

Chandler’s casual remark hit Lydia like a ton of bricks.

Lydia’s face went ashen, completely speechless.

She thought, “The Aniston family has never liked me, and Chandler, as the head of the family, holds absolute authority.

Even Charlotte has to show deference to Chandler—how much more so for me?

Offending him could be disastrous.”

With the conversation having reached this point, there was

Chapter **253** Biased

nothing Lydia could say that would change **the** situation.

**2/4**

Chandler narrowed his eyes and turned to Malcolm. “Will the Stone family clean up this mess themselves, or should I take care

of it?”

Malcolm, though disappointed in Lydia, was reluctant to let Chandler handle her, knowing it would only escalate matters.

He immediately said, “My two daughters have just been misbehaving. I’ll make sure to discipline **them** properly!”

“Misbehaving?”

Chandler chuckled, his tone dripping with sarcasm,

“Misbehaving to the point of almost causing serious harm. Mr. Stone, you’re quite the master of evasion. No wonder Celestial Ventures Group has been on a downward spiral lately. With your handling, it’s **only** a matter of time before the company collapses.”

Malcolm froze.

He thought, "Chandler's bringing up Celestial Ventures Group- is he trying to pressure me?"

Is he actually threatening to make the company go under?

If Chandler wanted to, he could significantly hurt Celestial Ventures Group's performance. If he really pushes..."

As a businessman, Malcolm weighed his options and realized

Chapter 253 Biased

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**2/4**

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## Chapter 253 Biased

that crossing Chandler wasn't worth the risk.

Besides, Lydia was clearly in the wrong.

3/4

Malcolm glared at Lydia. "Lydia! What's wrong with you? You used to be so obedient. Why are you so out of line this time? Apologize to Meryl right now!"

Lydia bit her lip hard, her eyes bloodshot.

Despite her seemingly gentle demeanor, Malcolm knew Lydia was very concerned about her pride.

Forcing her to apologize in front of everyone was something she would definitely refuse to do.

Malcolm walked over, grabbed Lydia by the arm, and dragged her to Meryl. "Meryl, it's your sister's fault. I see you're not too hurt— please, for my sake, don't hold this against her. You're sisters, and I want you to get along.

"Of course, I also made a mistake. I was too quick to blame you. But we're father and daughter, and family bonds are strong. Don't hold a grudge against me."

Meryl looked at them with a mixture of scorn and disbelief. Even when apologizing, Malcolm managed to deflect the blame onto himself, worried about Lydia's feelings.+

Bianca, observing this, felt a growing sense of unease toward her husband. She found the situation increasingly odd.

## Chapter 253 Biased

4/4

Meryl's voice was calm and resolute. "Malcolm, I'm exhausted from this whole morning's chaos. Please leave."

Malcolm was stunned, his face full of disbelief. "Meryl, why didn't you call me Dad?"

Without answering, Meryl slid back onto her bed, pulling the covers over herself.

Malcolm added, "I'm your father. Why aren't you calling me Dad?"



Write **your** comment

Chapter 254 I Was Faking It

Meryl thought, "Call you 'Dad'?" Do you even deserve that?"

1/4

Chandler had everyone leave, using Meryl's need for rest as an excuse.

Malcolm wanted to say something but swallowed his words when he saw Chandler's icy expression.

Dalton, who was lost in thought, had to be physically dragged out by Lydia.

Meryl, remembering that Chandler and Anne hadn't rested well the night before, quickly urged, "You all go get some sleep. I'm fine here."

Half an hour later, Chandler had to attend the annual company meeting. He had no choice but to leave for now.

"I'll come back this afternoon once I'm done," Chandler said, tucking her blanket in.

As he turned to leave, he noticed Dante still hanging around. Chandler hesitated, then said, "You..."

Dante quickly responded, "I'm stepping outside for a smoke. Anne, I need to talk to you. I'll be waiting in the hallway."

The **two** left the room together, and Anne shut the door behind

Chapter 254 I Was Faking It

**2/4**

them, her face hardening. "So Dante actually found his way to the hospital!"

Considering that Anne might still be unaware of the situation with Lola, Meryl whispered, "Maybe Dante has something important to discuss. It's best if the two of you talk things through."

Meryl's gaze fell on Anne's belly. "Besides, the baby... isn't gone yet, right? You're keeping the baby because... you can't bear to part with it."

Anne gently touched her abdomen.

At that moment in the operating room, she had truly intended to terminate the pregnancy.

But, inexplicably, when the doctor was about to insert the instrument, she sat up suddenly.

In that instant, Anne had a strong, overwhelming urge to carry the baby to term.

Given her circumstances, she could certainly afford to raise the child on her own.

Besides, the baby was innocent and shouldn't be a casualty of her marriage to Dante.

Anne was silent for a long time before saying, "I did choose to keep the baby, but it has nothing to do with Dante. I don't have lingering feelings for him."

Chapter 254 I Was Faking It

3/4

The doctor had indicated that she was at risk of miscarriage and that the fetus was unstable.

After leaving the operating room, Anne decided to let things take their course.

If the baby was strong enough, she'd keep it; if not, it was simply fate.

Meryl gently took Anne's hand. "Whatever decision you

make, I'll support you. If you still decide to divorce, I'll be the godmother and help raise the child."

Anne lightly touched Meryl's face. "So you're keen on being a pain-free mom, huh? Dream on."

"But your belly will eventually start to show. With Dante's personality, he'll never let go if he knows the baby's still here."

Anne had an idea and said, "What if the baby's father was Yancey? Don't you think Dante might just give up?"

Meryl was taken aback.

With Dante's pride, he would certainly struggle with the idea of his wife carrying another man's child.

Anne smiled, "I'm keeping Yancey as my lover and having his baby. Seems reasonable, right?"

Meryl frowned, realizing Anne was resolutely set **on** leaving

Chapter **254** I Was Faking It

Dante.

4/4

She glanced at the door. "Dante should still be out there. You should talk to him properly."

Anne nodded. "And you... are you really okay?"

Meryl's expression was a bit odd. "Actually, I was faking it. I didn't fall last night, and I didn't save Lydia. I followed her and took the fall on purpose to mess up her plans..."

Write your comment

Chapter 255 I Love You

Anne fell silent for a few seconds.

She'd just seen on the monitor that Meryl had actually saved Lydia, which struck her as odd.

She thought, "Lydia's done nothing but cause trouble. Meryl should be thrilled if Lydia were left crippled, so why on earth would she save Lydia?"

Anne asked, "So, you were out for that long?"

1/3

The mention of this made Meryl feel even more guilty. "Actually, I wasn't out cold. I just fell asleep and had a really long nap. I didn't realize you'd been sitting here all night. I'm so sorry."

"Seriously? I was up half the night worrying!"

Anne cupped Meryl's face in her

hands and gave it a firm,

affectionate squeeze.

“Well, I didn’t actually stay the whole night. I left around eleven, and Chandler stayed up with you. He’s the one who really kept watch.

“Meryl, Chandler really is a great guy. Even though he and Dante are friends, he’s nothing like that jerk. Seeing you with a good man, someone who’ll treat you right—well, as a friend, I’m genuinely happy for you.”

Chapter 255 | **Love** You

**2/3**

Anne knew all too well the hardships Meryl had faced with the Stone family and her biased parents. But she couldn’t do much to help.

Dalton had been even **worse**, trampling all over Meryl’s genuine feelings.

Anne said this, hoping Meryl wouldn’t close her heart off completely due to her past troubled relationship.

At least, in Anne’s opinion, Chandler was a good man.

Meryl understood what Anne meant.

She needed to focus her attention on Chandler.

Out of the corner of her eye, Meryl noticed Dante watching from outside. She subtly signaled to Anne.

Anne turned and locked eyes with Dante, her expression unreadable.

She shut the door behind her and stepped out.

Dante hadn’t?

seen Anne i

Anne in a week.

After he’d suffered a perforated ulcer from drinking too much, Anne had only signed the admission papers on the first day and then hadn’t visited him since.

Dante felt a deep ache in his heart. He understood that Anne

## Chapter 255 I Love You

3/3

**was** trying to cut ties with him for good, but he **wasn't** ready to let go.

He was bitterly aware that the rift between them had been manipulated by Lola.

That woman's scheming had led to this.

They'd lost their child.

The corridor was empty as Dante began to say, his voice heavy **with** regret, "Anne, Lola's in jail now. She orchestrated both of the incidents at the performances; we were all deceived by her.

"She pretended to save me, but it was all part of her plan. And the accident that ruined our dancing career? That was her doing, too, just to take your place as the lead dancer.

"Anne, I know you love dancing. I'm already looking for a lawyer to sue her and get compensation for you.

"Please, give me another chance. I don't want to divorce you. Our story shouldn't end like this. Don't you know how much I love you? You're the only woman I've ever loved in my life!"

Dante opened his arms wide, pulling Anne into a tight embrace.

Write **your** comment

## Chapter 256 Regret

The sudden embrace left Anne stunned for a few seconds.

She could smell a faint hint of cologne on Dante, a scent that was vaguely familiar.

It suddenly dawned on her that a year ago, for Dante's birthday, she had given him a bottle of cologne that smelled just like this.

Back then, they hadn't yet started talking about divorce. After giving him the gift, she noticed he hadn't used it. Gradually, Anne had forgotten about it.

It was only later, during a room cleaning, that she discovered the cologne was still in Dante's closet, unopened, with the ribbon still intact.

The realization had hurt her deeply.

She'd painstakingly chosen that gift over several weeks, wrapping it herself, only to find it shoved **away**, neglected.

It felt like a slap in the face.

At this moment, in the face of Dante's unexpected declaration of love, Anne felt oddly calm.

Anne no longer wanted to exhaust herself over Dante.

Chapter 256 Regret

**2/4**

She had loved him deeply but never received the response she longed for. That love had gradually dwindled away.

Now, Anne had come to realize that it was better to love herself first.

What she needed was to let go, even though the process was painful. But stepping away was necessary.

Anne took a step back, freeing herself from Dante's embrace, her eyes reflecting a distant sadness.

"I already know about Lola. The police came by a few days ago and told me that my injury wasn't an accident—it was orchestrated by Lola. So, I'll be handling the lawsuit myself."

Dante looked momentarily stunned, as if he hadn't expected her response to be so calm.

It was

almost as if she was talking about someone else's

situation.

"As for your love... I'm sorry. I once loved you deeply and hoped for a response, but now, I no longer do. Dante, for the sake of our past, just let me go."

Dante's eyes widened in pain. "How can you stop loving me? Anne, I refuse to accept that! You must love me—you're mine!"

Before Anne could react, Dante, disregarding the setting of the hospital corridor, bent down and forcefully kissed her.

#### Chapter 256 Regret

Anne instinctively tried to pull away, but Dante's grip was unyielding.

He held her shoulders firmly, pinning her against the wall.

Their lips met, and the moment Anne's lips parted, Dante's tongue slid in, hungrily exploring and entwining with hers.

It was as though he was trying to melt her with his fervor.

Anne struggled instinctively, but **he** was overwhelming and

insistent.

#### **3/4**

Feeling that he was crossing the line, Anne raised her hand and slapped Dante hard.

"I don't love you anymore, can't you understand that? You used to be so arrogant. Now, begging me to love you—don't you find that pathetic? You're Dante, the young master of the Paltrow family, for heaven's sake! Don't you have plenty of women?"

Anne had had enough of the lonely nights.

She thought to herself, "We've been married for three years, but Dante's visits home were few and far between. Every time I tried to reach him, he was either with that crowd of his or answering the phone with Lola on the line.

It felt like a widow's life. Once **or** twice, I could tolerate it, but three years in, I've reached my breaking point.

Lola is a problem, but is Dante blameless?

#### Chapter 256 Regret

He's always with Lola, leaving me, his legitimate wife, in the dust.

Where is his sense of responsibility as a married man?"

Dante was taken aback when Anne struck him in public.

**4/4**

Dante said, his voice filled with a mix of desperation and defiance, “Yeah, the Paltrow heir can have any woman he wants. Maybe you’re right! But Anne, I only want you!”

Since his dignity was already in tatters, Dante had nothing left to lose.

He let go of his pride and grabbed Anne’s hand, pulling it towards his own face.

“Anne, go ahead, hit me if you want. Hit me as many times as you need. Just please, if it’ll make you feel better, I’m begging you—love me again!”

Write your comment

Chapter 257 Come Back to Me

Dante never imagined he would be reduced to such a state of desperation.

**1/5**

His eyes were bloodshot, reflecting the last vestiges of hope as if he were clinging to a dying ember.

Anne was equally taken aback.

She could hardly believe that someone as prideful as Dante would forsake both his dignity and self-respect.

Now, he seemed willing **to** sacrifice everything just to hold on to her.

As Anne tried to pull her hand away, she was interrupted by Yancey’s sudden appearance.

Yancey’s melodious voice cut through the tense atmosphere like a ray of light piercing the darkness. “Anne.”

The **sunlight** streaming through the window highlighted Yancey’s profile, casting a warm glow on his hair, turning it into a rich chestnut hue.

Anne was startled. “What are you doing **here**? I thought you had classes today.”

Yancey’s gaze was filled with concern as **he** looked at Anne. “You

Chapter 257 Come Back to Me



didn't come home last night. I was worried about you."

**2/5**

Seeing the tired **lines** around Yancey's eyes, Anne frowned. "So, you waited up all night for **me?**"

Yancey nodded gently.

Anne **was** speechless for a moment.

Yancey then reached into his pocket and pulled out a lollipop, taking **a** few steps closer to Anne with a smile.

Yancey said, peeling **off** the wrapper, "I bought this for **you** on my way here.

"It's your favorite strawberry **flavor**, and it's the last one left. Pretty lucky, huh?"

"Very lucky," Anne said, opening her mouth **just** as Yancey placed the lollipop into it.

The sweet strawberry flavor melted on her tongue, warming her heart.

Dante's eyes were bloodshot and filled with rage as he watched the scene unfold.

He thought to himself, "Anne and Yancey are so comfortable together! But they've only known each other for a short time.

What does 'waited **up all** night' mean? Have they really moved in together?

Chapter 257 Come Back to Me

**3/5**

How can Anne be alone with another man? She's still my wife!"

Dante's frustration boiled over, as if invisible hands were tearing at his heart.

He looked at Anne with pained eyes. "Anne... come back to me."

Anne seemed to ignore him completely, instead wrapping her arm around Yancey's. "Don't you have class today?"

Yancey's voice was soft and gentle. "I skipped class to see you."

“That’s not okay,” Anne said, noting that as his sponsor, she had a duty to encourage him to focus on his studies.

Checking the time, Anne realized he could still make it to the afternoon classes if he left now.

“Let’s go. My car is downstairs. I’ll drive you back to school.”

Yancey, with a hint of mischief in his tone, asked, “Does that mean you’ll come to class with me?”

Anne paused, momentarily taken aback.

“If it’s not too inconvenient...” Yancey continued softly, not pressuring her.

Anne replied, taking Yancey’s hand, “Not at all. It’s perfect. We can go have lunch at that place near your school afterward.”

Chapter 257 Come Back to Me

4/5

Yancey’s face lit up with a warm, genuine smile. “Sounds great.”

Dante watched in disbelief as Anne and Yancey prepared to leave. “Anne, you’re just going to walk away from me like this?”

Anne turned back, giving him a smile. “Can’t you see? I’m about to have a date with my young boyfriend.”

Dante’s **anger** flared. “I’m still your husband! What’s he to you but a gold-digger? You spend money, and he flashes a smile. Do you really think he’s sincere?”

Dante’s words carried a sting of insult, and Yancey’s lips tightened.

He dropped his head slightly, showing a flicker of hurt.

“Anne, wake up! Don’t degrade yourself like this! If you come back to me, I’ll give you everything—even my heart! I can give you everything he can, and even more than he can’t!” Dante pleaded, desperation clear in his voice.

Anne, however, was unfazed. “He wants my money, and I want him for his looks. It’s a fair trade. Better than giving everything and ending up with nothing. As for your heart... **you** can keep **it**. I’m not interested anymore.”

Anne took Yancey's hand and began to leave, leaving Dante frozen in place, as if he were under a spell.

He felt as though a heavy weight was pressing down on his chest, making it hard to breathe. His body shook uncontrollably,

Chapter 257 Come Back to Me

his face a portrait of agony and confusion.

5/5

Dante thought, "Anne, what will it take for you to come back to me?"

Write your comment

Chapter 258 Why?

Back in the ward, Malcolm and Bianca glared at Lydia with disappointment.

"Lydia, what were you thinking? You and Meryl are both my daughters. What you did today has utterly humiliated our family. This is a disgrace. You let me down!" Malcolm's voice was tight with anger.

Malcolm had once defended Lydia with unwavering zeal, but now, the support felt like a slap in the face.

They had just been thrown out of the ward by Chandler.

Lydia's expulsion was one thing—after all, she had caused the trouble.

But for Chandler to throw Malcolm out, too? That was a blow to Malcolm's pride, which he wasn't prepared for.

Malcolm was fuming with frustration, especially since he had hoped Chandler could help Celestial Ventures Group. Now, that was a lost cause.

Lydia's eyes welled up with tears, and she looked genuinely hurt.

"Dad, I don't know what got into me. I'm really sorry. It felt like I was being possessed or something. That wasn't my intention **at** all."

Chapter **258** Why?

Bianca frowned. "Sorry? You still tried to argue in front of everyone just now! If you had just admitted it sooner, we wouldn't have been embarrassed."

Lydia bit her lip, feeling cornered as her lies unraveled. "I... I must have been possessed or something..."

Bianca's gaze was filled with disappointment. She had raised Lydia for decades.

2/3

Lydia's scheming and her attempt to shift blame were becoming increasingly outrageous.

Malcolm said firmly, "Enough, Lydia's hurt, so let's not push it. Let her rest, and we shouldn't keep her here any longer. Let's go."

Bianca felt a strange discomfort in her chest.

"Why is it that whenever Lydia messes up, you're always defending her? I don't have the right to lecture her?" She asked.

Malcolm's excessive protection of Lydia was becoming increasingly apparent. Bianca hadn't noticed it much before, but now it felt unsettling.

Malcolm's frustration boiled over. "I'm not defending anyone! Are you looking to pick a fight with me now?"

The tension between Malcolm and Bianca was palpable, and Lydia quickly stepped in to mediate. "Alright, Mom, Dad,

Chapter 258 Why?

Dalton's outside smoking. Maybe let's just drop it for now?"

Reluctantly, Malcolm and Bianca left, exchanging glares.

Meanwhile, Dalton was slumped against the wall in the stairwell, lost in thought as he chain-smoked.

The hospital was quiet at this hour, and he heard the muffled sounds of an argument between Anne and Dante on the other side of a fire door.

Dalton wasn't eavesdropping on purpose. He had been there first, and Dante and Anne arrived after him.

**3/3**

The door **was only** partially closed, and Dalton could hear every word of their heated exchange.

After about fifteen minutes, the argument subsided.

Dalton was taken aback by how Dante, usually so proud and aloof, had humbled himself so much to win Anne back.

It was a stark revelation.

For a moment, Dalton felt a deep, resonant sadness from

Dante's side.

Oddly, he found himself feeling a sense **of** shared pain.

Write **your** comment

Chapter 259 Explanation

Outside, there was an eerie silence, leading Dalton to suspect that they had finally left.

Just then, Lydia's call came through.

1/5

After **a** single glance at the screen, Dalton snubbed the call and hung up.

He pushed through the fire exit and, to his surprise, found Dante still there, sitting on the ground.

Their eyes met, and Dalton could clearly see the redness in Dante's eyes.

"Dante."

"Yeah?"

Dalton greeted him briefly, then started to walk away, but something made him pause.

He turned back and said, "Dante, if you ever need a drink, just give me a call."

Dante asked, "Did you hear everything?"

"I wasn't **trying** to."

2/5

## Chapter 259 Explanation

Dante's gaze was bitter. "Even if you did, it's nothing new.

"If losing my dignity meant Anne would come back to me, I'd drag my dignity through the mud myself."

Dalton felt a pang of empathy. Seeing Dante like this, he suddenly felt a hollow ache inside.

As a man himself, he realized he wasn't much better off than Dante.

Dalton thought, "Dante wants Anne. He's willing to express it openly. And me? What can I do?"

Dalton couldn't help but smile wryly at himself.

Inside the hospital room, Lydia saw Dalton enter and immediately got up from the bed to greet him.

"How come you've been smoking so much?"

The smell of nicotine clung to Dalton as he stepped into the room.

Lydia poured him a glass of water and offered it to him gently. "Dalton, would you like some water?"

Dalton didn't take the glass. His eyes, cold and distant, swept over Lydia's face. "You can keep it."

Lydia tensed at his frosty tone.

## Chapter 259 Explanation

Dalton had been off since earlier.

He had taken the recording device from Meryl and played it himself.

Now that everyone knew the full story and was blaming her, Dalton had been eerily silent.

3/5

The silence only heightened Lydia's unease, like the calm before a storm.

Still, since Dalton hadn't asked any questions, Lydia wasn't going to bring up the matter herself.

She wasn't about to dig her own grave. With things being what they were, there was no hiding it, so playing dumb seemed like the best strategy.

The room's unsettling quietness only added to Lydia's discomfort.

She tried to change the subject. "Christmas is coming up soon. I've prepared gifts for everyone at home."

Usually, the Aniston family would gather at the Aniston Villa for Christmas Eve, and this year would be no exception.

It was the time of year when the different branches of the family tried to outdo each other.

Even though Dylan had stepped back from managing the company, he was still the head of the family and held a

Chapter 259 Explanation

significant stake in Galaxy Holdings Group.

4/5

Everyone wanted to make a good impression on him.

Dalton seemed disinterested, showing no reaction.

Lydia continued, "I've gotten your grandpa a painting. I just bought it at an auction through a friend, and it cost me 10 million dollars.

"For

your mom, I got jewelry, and for the others, I prepared gifts. worth over a million each. Dalton, do you think that's enough?"

Lydia had only recently married into the family, and Dalton's mother didn't like her.

She had to find ways to win people over.

She'd spent 30 or 40 million dollars on gifts for the Aniston family.

The expenses had drained her bank account, but Lydia knew she couldn't skimp on this

The Aniston fan

seen it all.

was at the top of the social ladder; they'd

If her gifts seemed too casual, it would not **only** be disappointing but also undermine her status.

So Lydia had spared no expense.

Chapter 260 Excuse

"Dalton, it's a misunderstanding!" Lydia pleaded.

**1/4**

Dalton retorted with disbelief etched across his face, "A misunderstanding? Lydia, I never imagined you could be so cold-hearted. To frame Meryl, you'd even jump down the stairs yourself? If you're this ruthless to yourself, what else are you capable **of?**

"By dragging her down like this, you're hoping to turn everyone against Meryl. She's your sister! You two have lived under the same roof for years! How could you be so cruel?"

For a brief moment, Lydia felt lost, her mind racing back to a familiar scene from three years ago.

Dalton had stood there, furious, confronting Meryl after he'd learned about Lydia's kidnapping by a gang of thugs.

"Meryl, you viper! Lydia is your sister, and she's done nothing but look out for you. How could you send those guys after her?"



“Meryl, you’ve let me down. Someone like you shouldn’t even bet in this world!”

Back then, she had been the one sobbing uncontrollably, Dalton by her side, comforting her while he lashed out at Meryl.

But now, three years later, the roles had flipped. Dalton saw her

Chapter 260 Excuse

as the villain, the wicked woman.

A chill crept through Lydia.

She grasped Dalton’s arm desperately. “Please, Dalton, let me explain!”

Perhaps it was her injury that made her look so worn down.

Her face was bare of makeup, and she gazed **up** at him, eyes shimmering with tears.

**2/4**

“Ever since you got back from Griffore, you’ve avoided me. You haven’t answered my calls, and it’s driving me insane.

“Dalton, I’m terrified you might leave me. Do you know what I’ve been going through every day? I **wait** in **an** empty house for you to come home, only to find myself waiting for days without a word.”

As the words tumbled out, her voice trembled, and tears streamed down her cheeks.

“I did all of this because I love you. I was afraid Meryl would take you away from me. I panicked at the thought of you two rekindling your old flame, and that’s why I tried to undermine her.

“I just wanted your full attention, Dalton.

“I know I messed up, and I’m sorry. But please believe **me**, it was all out **of** love. I’ve never done anything **this** harsh to Meryl

Chapter **260** Excuse

before. This is the first time, and it’s killing me inside.”

“That’s enough!” Dalton interrupted, his tone icy.

**3/4**

He didn’t want to hear any more of Lydia’s excuses. She had just publicly dumped all the blame on Meryl, trying to play the victim.

Dalton wasn’t fooled; he had finally seen through Lydia’s facade.

The way she had leaped down the stairs without a moment’s hesitation showed this wasn’t her first time pulling such a stunt.

Dalton questioned, “Love me, love **me**— does that mean every time something goes wrong, **you** use that as an excuse?”

“Lydia, you lied to me about playing the cello, saying it was because you loved me. Now, you’re still hiding behind that same old excuse.

“If loving me leads **you** to commit such despicable acts, then don’t bother loving me at all!”

His voice grew colder with each word, finally reaching a near roar.

When he raised his voice, Lydia’s tears froze **on** her cheeks.

Lydia pleaded, “Dalton, I already apologized **to** Meryl! **Why** won’t **you** let this **go**?”

“If that’s not enough for you, I can go apologize again. I’ll beg

Chapter 260 Excuse

her. Is that what you want?

“Just tell me what it takes to make you feel better.”

**4/4**

She was so desperate, her hand reaching around Dalton’s waist, sobbing uncontrollably.

The sound of her quiet whimpers felt like a descent into darkness, her shoulders shaking with grief.

On any other day, Dalton would have felt his heart breaking at the sight of her like this.

But right now, all he did was pull out a tissue and hand it to her.

“You’re still sick. The doctor said you need to rest. Wipe your tears and stop crying, alright?”

With that, he gently removed her hands from his waist and turned to leave.

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