

Can't Win Me Back

Chapter 2356

Jasper steadied his breath the moment he pushed the door open to Alyssa's hospital ward. For some reason, he was feeling really nervous.

There was almost nothing that could ever unnerve him. Other than Newton, Alyssa was the only other person who could make him feel disquieted.

A strange serenity filled the room, broken only by the faint hum of the medical equipment.

Alyssa was still awake. She was sitting upright against the headboard. Her gaze was fixed on the darkness outside the window; her face turned to the side as if lost in thought.

The new moon cast no light; there were no stars. She seemed to be staring at nothing, into the endless pitch black.

Jasper froze in the doorway, his eyes widening slightly as he took in the sight of her. His breath hitched in his chest. This woman, once so full of optimism and light, now appeared fragile, defeated. Her spirit seemed so broken that it felt as if a single touch could shatter her completely.

It wasn't until a few moments later that Alyssa seemed to notice his presence. Slowly, she turned her head. Her eyes met his-deep, unreadable.

"W-What are you doing here?" Her voice trembled slightly as she spoke, her body stiffening beneath the loose hospital gown. Her eyes were red, and her muscles were tense, betraying her unease and distaste for his

presence.

Jasper stepped forward, holding a thermal flask in his hand. His gaze was somber as he asked, "Are you feeling better?"

Alyssa scoffed. Her hand, in which a cannula was inserted, tensed up. "I haven't died of hypothermia, thanks to your kind gesture."

The image of Alyssa curling up pitifully into a ball in the freezing snow appeared in Jasper's mind. An inexplicable ball of fury rose within Jasper. He couldn't hold back. "Alyssa, why? Why would you keep trying to end your life, hurting yourself over and over just because of me?"

Alyssa's chest tightened at the question. Her already pale face grew even whiter as if the blood had drained from it entirely.

"I told you, I will keep the promise I made. It's just that I couldn't make it that day." Jasper spoke to her in a rather stern tone, perhaps out of that feeling of annoyance that was bugging him.

Alyssa became a little pig-headed, possibly because she was still feeling unwell. "Why couldn't you make it that day?"

"I was in a rush to find someone."

In a croaky voice, Alyssa asked, "Who?"

The look in Jasper's eyes deepened. He hesitated, mulling over what he should say. In the end, all he gave was a cold reply, "Someone who's very important to me."

Alyssa's lips curled into a bitter smile, her heart sinking. Regret flooded her as she realized she shouldn't have asked. Hadn't she been embarrassed enough?

She used to be Jasper's most important person. But now, it seemed, anyone else could easily pull his attention away, making it all too easy for him to break his promises and leave her behind.

"Don't do that again next time." Jasper placed the thermal flask at the side of Alyssa's bed. He lowered his eyes and continued, "It's not worth it for you to hurt yourself because of me."

"Indeed, it's not worth it. So, I won't do anything foolish for you again." Her gaze dropped to her lap.

That night, she had felt completely destroyed, wishing for nothing but an escape from the pain. But in his eyes, it was all just something "not worth it".

Jasper opened the thermos flask and removed its inner compartment. In a deep voice, he said, "That's good to know."

Alyssa clenched her jaw, fighting back the tears as she struggled to flash Jasper a bright yet strained smile. "I told you there won't be a next time. I hope you haven't forgotten, Mr. Beckett."

"Here, have some soup. It'll help you feel better." Jasper deftly avoided the topic, shifting the conversation. He poured the aromatic soup into a bowl and offered it to Alyssa.

"Take it away. I don't need any of your concern!"

Without warning, a wave of emotion hit Alyssa. She flung her arm, still tethered to the tube, and the hot soup splattered all over Jasper. His crisply ironed suit was now soaked and stained.

Sweat trickled down her forehead as she huddled on the bed, instinctively pulling away from Jasper. His gesture of kindness only seemed to heighten her distress.

Jasper's pupils constricted. It was only at this moment that he noticed her hands wrapped in layers of bandages, as she had been hiding them under the covers the whole time.

"Go... Go away!" Alyssa cried out as she tried to hide her bandaged hands under the covers again.

She couldn't show her weakness. She refused to, and it was something she'd never allow herself to do.

Chapter 2357

The hot soup soaked through Jasper's clothes, and the scalding heat mirrored the intense temperature of his body at that moment.

Yet, his focus wasn't on the discomfort. He leaned forward and grabbed Alyssa by the wrists, pulling her hands toward him with firm insistence.

'Let me have a look. Do your hands still hurt?'

"Let go of me!" Alyssa struggled as tears filled her eyes.

*Stop struggling. You haven't recovered from your injuries!" Jasper's breaths became heavier as he tightened his grasp over her wrists.

He saw her tears glistening in her eyes as she waved her bandaged hands at him, her face a mixture of misery and comic helplessness. Yet, there was an undeniable adorableness about her that sparked a deep, protective instinct in him.

Memories of the past flashed in Jasper's mind.

As his gaze remained fixed on Alyssa, something dark stirred within him, a coldness he had held for so long rising to the surface.

Then, without warning, his mind blanked. He pressed his chapped lips against hers, feeling her soft, trembling mouth against his. Their noses brushed together, and he could sense the gentle dampness of her skin.

Through their tangled breaths, it was clear-Jasper's kissing was awkward, almost painful, like a teenager clumsily exploring love for the first time. He bit her tongue in his eagerness. But Alyssa-she endured it in silence. As much as this was a terrible kiss, she couldn't help but sink into it.

Despite the clumsiness of the kiss, something in her could not pull away. It was as if, after a lifetime of hardship, she had been handed a piece of sweetness buried within sharp grains of sand, and she was willing to swallow it whole.

Jasper's intense masculinity took Alyssa hostage, consuming her from the inside out.

Suddenly, a sharp pain exploded in Jasper's temples, and his vision blurred. He was forced to pull away, his face stiffening as the agony surged through him.

Alyssa stared at him, her lips still moist from the kiss, her eyes wide with confusion.

Jasper felt like a thousand devils were howling and tearing at each other inside his mind. He bit his tongue until it went numb, desperately trying to calm the chaos within.

He summoned every ounce of strength within him to suppress the demons that roiled inside. It was the only way he could appear normal in front of Alyssa, rather than a creature dependent on medication to retain his humanity.

"Don't be with Justin. Don't meet him... Can you promise me that?" His voice was low and strained. Cold sweat covered him.

"We've broken up, haven't we? You were the one who ended things. What right do you have to tell me what to do now?"

Alyssa's eyes were red, and she provoked him deliberately, a bitter smile playing on her lips. "Does it bother you to see the person who was once yours with someone else? Are you bothered, or do you still care for me?"

"We were once lovers. I just don't want you to get hurt again." Jasper's words trembled with barely contained emotion. His hands shook, but no one saw. His urge to search for his pills almost consumed him. "That's all I wanted to say. It's up to you whether or not you want to heed my words. But just know that I will never harm you." After saying that, he strutted toward the door.

"Earlier... what was that about?" Alyssa questioned him out of the blue.

Jasper stopped in his tracks. He closed his eyes briefly, simply responding. "Good night."

*Jasper, you are so good at tormenting me," Alyssa said with a wry smile, watching as he walked away.

She curled up into herself, hugging her knees tightly. Her heart ached as she replayed the kiss, unsure whether it was born from lingering affection or some primal instinct buried deep within him.

Without love, a lifetime felt impossibly long.

Yet, it was too suffocating when there was love.

At midnight, Justin arrived at the airport in Kontina's capital city on his private plane.

With Sheryl and Remy as company, he sat in a luxury car that sped through the night.

The atmosphere in the car was tense. Justin had taken his medications, and he rested with his eyes closed the entire way. Remy was in the driver's seat while Sheryl sat next to him, holding her breath.

Having worked for Justin for so long, of course, she knew who he traveled all the way to Kontina to meet with.

Despite being someone who often smiled, Justin became quiet and gloomy when he thought of the man he was about to see.

The car eventually stopped outside a grand, mysterious estate. Sheryl's voice broke the silence. 'Mr. Justin. We've arrived.'

Chapter 2358

The massive, opulent gates creaked open slowly as Remy steered the luxury car into the Sedonian fortress, a relic from the Middle Ages, with casual ease.

After parking, both Remy and Sheryl got out of the car and attended to Justin.

As Justin emerged from the vehicle, his expression remained impassive, but his eyes were chillingly dark, reflecting an intensity he kept tightly in check.

His stride was steady, exuding an air of authority, eerily reminiscent of Jasper's presence.

He was only able to appear so because he got Sheryl to inject a dose of adrenaline before he got out of the car. This shot was one that RC Biotechnology Research Institute had recently developed.

His only purpose was to no longer look like an invalid before that man. He had to make himself presentable. "This is a private residence. Please hold on for a moment."

This place was heavily guarded at the door. Bodyguards wearing suits and white gloves stopped them in their tracks.

With a vicious look in his eyes, Justin curled his lips into a condescending smirk. Without a word, he reached into his chest pocket and withdrew a golden-edged card, presenting it to the bodyguards.

The two bodyguards lowered their heads to examine the card. Their expressions shifted dramatically as they immediately bowed low. "Welcome, sir! This way, please."

The change in demeanor was jarring-just moments before, they had been cold, and now they were deeply respectful. Sheryl couldn't suppress her smile, following Justin with curiosity bubbling inside her.

She couldn't help but glance at the card. It was a striking, gold-colored poker card, its surface etched with intricate designs and adorned with gleaming rubies. The King of Hearts was printed on it in bold relief.

An attendant led them deeper into the fortress.

Remy was expressionless the whole time, while Sheryl's eyes darted everywhere silently.

Deep down, she was in absolute awe of the extravagance of the building's interior design. At the same time, she tried her best to conceal her emotions as she did not want to bring about embarrassment to Justin through her callow reactions.

Growing up, she had felt the same awe when Sophia brought her in and out of Seaview Manor. When she later became Justin's follower, she had thought his luxurious Wiktorian house in Mosgravia was the height of opulence. But this place was on an entirely different level.

In that moment, it became clear to her that she had much to learn. She had been too naïve, too limited in her thinking.

The walls were lined with authentic paintings and priceless antiques, each item alone worth millions. It was a world that felt out of reach.

Sheryl could no longer suppress her curiosity. She asked, "Sir, where... where are we?"

Looking straight ahead, Justin answered frostily, "We're at Kings' Club."

Even though Remy wasn't paying particular attention, he paused when he heard that name.

He'd heard whispers of Kings' Club from influential figures in far-flung parts of the world. It was known that no amount of money could buy access to this place. Only those with immense power and family prestige could hope to gain entry.

As it turned out, this was where Kings' Club was.

"In this place, people can fulfill any desire, buy anything they want-it surpasses even the wildest imagination," Justin continued, his lips twisting into a dark, knowing smile.

Sheryl was astounded. She questioned further, "So, was that poker card you had... an invitation card?"

'It's a symbol of my identity."

"In that case, the King of Spades means..."

With a grim look on his face, Justin explained, "Jack, Queen, King, and Ace are the different ranks of the VIPs of this place. J is the lowest rank; by inference, Ace is the highest of all ranks. Out of the four card suits, spades is the most honorable one."

Sheryl beamed in awe. "I knew it. No matter where we go, you are the one who stands out from the crowd with nobility!"

With both his hands in his pockets, Remy stared at Sheryl as if she was an idiot who only knew how to flatter others.

"Are you hard of hearing? Sir has shared that Ace is above King. Out of all the Aces, there is also the Ace of Spades. That is the person with the highest rank of them all."

Sheryl shot him a fierce glare.

Chapter 2359

Some people never change, no matter how much they alter their appearance or get a second chance at life. They still cling to the habit of sucking up to others. To Remy, Sheryl was no different than that vile woman, Alyssa.

*Remy is right. Aces are the noblest of all VIPs. Justin narrowed his eyes. "I may not be an Ace, but I am quite familiar with someone who holds the Ace of Spades."

As they spoke, the attendant led them toward a massive door.

The door opened with a loud mechanical whirr, releasing a cloud of smoke and a heady, sensual atmosphere that contrasted sharply with the serenity outside. It felt as though they were entering a completely different world.

The room they stepped into was expansive, with rows of seats rising in tiers from the second floor upward, all facing a stage at the center. People were seated in the stands, their faces hidden in the dim lighting, making them appear as unsettling, lifeless marionettes from a distance.

But it was what was happening on the stage that nearly caused Sheryl to scream in shock. Even Remy, who had a cold and hardened demeanor, widened his eyes in disbelief.

Several naked women were confined in glass cages suspended high above the stage. Each had a choker around their neck, and their movements were pitiful-some crawled, some shivered, while others curled up in the corners of their cages.

It was a horrifying display-inhumane, humiliating. The women were treated no better than animals.

This scene laid bare the harsh reality of people being dehumanized, victims of the rich's merciless disregard. "Is this... part of human trafficking?" Sheryl asked, wide-eyed.

Although Sheryl had been involved in many immoral deeds herself, this obscene scene was still a jolt to her, pushing the boundaries of her already skewed moral compass.

"There are transactions involved, but it's not human trafficking." Justin's voice was calm, though his eyes held a trace of impatience.

"These women would have no value if they were simply sold for their looks," he continued. "The real value lies in the blood running through their veins and their organs."

Sheryl, who had spent considerable time at RC Biotechnology Research Institute after becoming one of Justin's followers, immediately grasped the meaning behind his words.

In that instant, she felt her limbs go numb. She shuddered.

She had heard rumors about the elite of Mosgravia-some of the wealthiest and most powerful individuals- draining the blood of young women with superior blood quality, conducting full transfusions with themselves, or extracting specific contents from their blood to consume.

All in a desperate attempt to achieve immortality and preserve their youth.

The realization hit her like a physical blow. The crimes being committed here were grotesque and terrifying.

Remy, too, frowned. The discomfort in his chest was undeniable as he observed the women trapped in their hopeless cages. He didn't want to go any deeper into this place, but as Justin's bodyguard, he had no choice but to remain at his side.

The attendant led Justin, Sheryl, and Remy up to the stands. When they got to the door of a particular private room, the attendant prompted, "This way, Mr. Beckett."

The attendant pulled the thick, velvet curtain back and Justin entered, his expression unreadable.

Just as the curtain closed behind them, Sheryl and Remy caught sight of the man seated in the private room. He appeared to be in his 50s, yet the way he carried himself-his sharp, piercing eyes, a suit of rich red velvet, and

slicked-back hair-created the illusion of someone in their early 40s.

"Hello, Uncle Zachary," Justin said, leaning forward slightly with a polite smile, the kind reserved for elders. Zachary returned the smile, showing off his perfect teeth. His voice was rich and full as he greeted, "Jay, it's been a long time. It looks like your legs have improved."

Sheryl was stricken with fear.

Wasn't this man Zachary Dutton, Justin's mother's oldest brother and the murderer who had shocked the nation years ago? Wasn't he serving a sentence in prison? How could he be here?

Chapter 2360

Remy's gaze was icy as he took in the scene before him-Zachary lounging with a woman perched on his lap. Her scant clothing barely concealed her while Zachary's hands groped her roughly. She forced a smile, her expression betraying a mix of discomfort and resignation.

The room reeked of debauchery. Dim lights cast a murky glow over the scene, amplifying the suffocating atmosphere. Around them, women stood like objects behind glass cages, each wearing a choker with a string of numbers-price tags marking their value.

And just like those women in the glass cages, she, too, had a choker around her neck.

As Justin's loyal follower, Remy was no stranger to the darkness of the world. Yet, an unfamiliar heaviness pressed against his chest as he stood in this room. The degradation of these women, stripped of dignity and reduced to commodities, made his stomach chum.

Unable to bear it, Remy averted his eyes, fists clenching involuntarily. He turned abruptly, unable to stomach the vile display any longer.

The thick curtains lowered, severing Remy and Sheryl's view of the room. Moments later, a burly bodyguard with foreign features emerged. Speaking fluent Cyrrisian, he instructed them to leave.

Remy spun on his heel and strode away without hesitation, but Sheryl lingered, casting furtive glances back. She was unsettled. Ever since joining Justin, she had been present for every negotiation, whether it was with Jasper or Jameson. Yet, this time was different-it was an exception.

As her curiosity burned, a chill traced her spine.

The lighting in the private room was dim, and smoke surrounded both Zachary and Justin.

Justin playfully groped the woman in his arms, but his narrowed eyes told a different story. Under the dim lighting, the mix of malice, cunning, and ruthlessness in his gaze seemed almost otherworldly.

'Long time no see, Uncle Zachary. How have you been?' Justin asked with a smile.

A smile tugged at his lips, but there was a stiffness in his demeanor that betrayed his true emotions.

*I've been good. Great, in fact. How could I not be when I have the respect of such an obedient nephew as well as these young and beautiful women nourishing me? I'm as happy as a clam!"

As if to emphasize his point, Zachary grabbed the woman on his lap. His fingers dug into her, and despite the sharp intake of breath that escaped her, she dared not utter a sound.

'As long as you're happy."

Justin hated the smell of cigarette smoke. He lowered his eyes and retrieved a white handkerchief from his suit pocket. As he feigned nonchalance, he covered his nose and mouth with it, then let out a few stifled coughs.

"Uncle Zachary, you've summoned me all the way from Solana City to Kontina. I presume you've something pressing you wish to discuss. If this is indeed the case, then it would be best to speak in private."

Zachary roared with laughter. "My dear Jay, you are right!"

Without warning, Zachary pressed his half-smoked cigar into the woman's flawless skin. She flinched violently, her trembling body a picture of pain and humiliation, yet not a sound escaped her lips.

"Bugger off." The words were barely out before Zachary's expression darkened, and he harshly shoved the woman to the ground.

The woman scrambled to her feet, hastily covering herself as she fled the room, tears streaming down her face.

As they got down to business, Zachary's demeanor shifted. His indulgent smirk was replaced by the expression of a shrewd businessman. He spoke to Justin like a superior would command his subordinates, even though Justin was his biological nephew.

'Justin, it's been some time since you returned to Solana City. How's your progress with taking control of Beckett Group? I'd like an update.'

A bodyguard placed a cup of tea before Justin. He lifted it with measured grace, inhaling its aroma before responding, "I'm still in the planning stages."

"Oh? In other words, there hasn't been any progress?" Zachary narrowed his eyes and looked at Justin condescendingly. "Justin, you were doing pretty well with your businesses in Kontina and Mosgravia, and you were able to develop them at great speed.

"Why have you become fearful and hesitant once you've returned to Cyrris? Has your ability deteriorated, or are you afraid of that bastard from the Beckett family?'

Jasper was the bastard that Zachary was referring to.

The muscles in Justin's jaw tensed up. He was about to answer when Zachary leaned back and clicked his tongue.

He mocked him once again. "I understand if you're incapable of beating that bastard. After all, he has solidified his position in Beckett Group while you wasted years recuperating overseas.

"Add to that, his marriage into the Winston family and their KS Group backing... it's no wonder you've been left in the dust."

"I appreciate your concern, Uncle Zachary. But those challenges have already been addressed."

The comment drained Justin's interest in his tea, but he maintained his composure, carefully placing the cup down. Wearing a casual smile, he explained, 'Jasper and Ms. Alyssa have cut all ties. Things are far from amicable between them.'

Zachary raised a brow. "Oh?"Material