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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2241 - 2250

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2241

Instantly, Joan sobered up.

“Larry, what’s wrong?”

“I want to eat you whole.” At that, he leaned in to kiss her.

What happened next was an act that the two enjoyed.

Meanwhile, on the other end.

“Noelle, can you stop this? Hurry up and go home,” Caiden groaned. When she heard him, a trace of melancholy ran past Noelle’s eyes.

Why does he hate me so much? What horrible things have I ever done to him?

“Caiden, I think it’s time for us to have a talk,” Noelle solemnly suggested.

At the start, Caiden was surprised by her words. However, he quickly recomposed himself and schooled his features. Confounded, he wondered, What is there to talk about? There’s nothing to talk about.

“I have something to deal with, so I’m going to leave now.” Caiden turned away from her.

“Caiden Owens! You can’t leave. I know you have nothing to do. You have to have this talk with me today. I’m afraid that there will be no chance for us to talk about this if I don’t speak my mind now.”

The somber way Noelle was speaking startled Caiden, and he began to ponder if he had gone overboard. Even if I don’t like her, we can still be friends. Moreover, she’s Jaden’s sister, so she’s like my sister.

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“Fine. What do you want to talk about? Speak.” Caiden sat down on the couch beside him before fixing his gaze on her.

At that very moment, Noelle was nervous. She wanted to tell him she loved him and she could not leave him, but she dared not to. Noelle feared the two would not even be friends once these words left her lips.

“Why do you hate me?” she asked instead.

There isn’t any reason. I just don’t like to be with you.

Nothing good ever happened to him when he was with her, and that was the norm since they were children. Thus, to avoid a repeat of those incidents, Caiden chose to avoid her.

“I don’t hate you; you’re overthinking it. I just like to be alone,” came Caiden’s belated response.

Won’t he feel bad to lie to me in this way? He likes being alone? Then why would he court Joan? He can’t even lie well.

“Cut the crap. I only want to hear the truth. Don’t say things like you’re a loner who likes to be by yourself. Those are just excuses!” Noelle cried out.

She’s right. These are all just excuses.

“Noelle, you know that I like to bury myself in my studies and work. It’s been like this since young. I only enjoy being around those I like. It’s only those moments that I could relax. I don’t know if you can understand what I mean,” Caiden muttered.

He was turning her down tactfully with truthful words.

Of course Noelle knew what he meant. At the end of the day, it was because she was not Joan. If she were Joan, he would have stared at her happily. However, she was Noelle, and that was why he did not want to bother himself with her.

“There are various kinds of love, Caiden. Do you really know what your feelings for Joan are?” Noelle persistently questioned.

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Of course I do. My feelings for Joan have never changed. I like her, and I always think of her. Even when I'm overseas. Even when I found out she's married.

It did not matter. True love had no boundaries. Caiden never cared about others' opinions of him.

That was what love was. It was about him listening to his heart to seek the one who belonged to him. It was courage. It was a goal.

Perhaps that was the mindset of those who knew love well. Their life was formed around love, and they would do everything to make sure it stayed that way.

Caiden had never thought about what would happen in the future. All he did were the things he enjoyed, and that included loving Joan.

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In the office, Larry sat on the couch as he read through his documents. He had a dark expression glued to his face.

Outside the office, everyone was hectic with their tasks. It seemed like they were anxious, but at the same time, they seemed like they were enjoying it.

The employees of Norton Corporation were as terrifying as Larry. To them, working overtime was the norm.

"Rest for a while," Joan whispered to him suddenly.

Hm? Why is she here? When did she arrive? Larry raised his head to look at her, surprised.

"Why are you here?" Larry queried.

"I'm here to deliver food to you and to take a look at you. I'm scared you'd miss me too much," Joan murmured.

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My, when did she start acting in this way? A teasing smile grew on Larry's lips. "Guess what I'm thinking now?"

Then, with a tug, he pulled her into his arms.

Embarrassment surged into Joan's brain when she glanced outside the room.

"This is a public space. Hurry up and eat your food instead," she hastily said as a blush crept upon her face.

She's actually shy? We're a married couple. Why is she still getting so embarrassed? However, that was a sight that Larry liked seeing.

"Come, let's eat together." With that said, he then placed her on the couch.

"Look at them. They're so loving with each other."

"Hear, hear. Mr. Norton even hugged her earlier."

"Seriously! Who said Mr. and Mrs. Norton had a bad relationship? They deserve a beating for saying that."

In a corner of the office, several coworkers were in quiet discussion about Larry and Joan. All of them had similar looks of jealousy on their faces.

Out of the blue, Larry said, "Open your mouth. I'm going to feed you."

What is he trying to do? Is he trying to cause a scene again? Joan looked at him suspiciously.

"Larry, what are you trying to do? Why are you so lovey-dovey all of a sudden? It's really unlike you," Joan carefully voiced.

"Hush. Just eat it," Larry responded.

So I'm not even allowed to talk now? How bossy.

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"Mr. Norton, it's time for lunch," came Jessica's voice when she suddenly entered the room. The moment she saw the two being endearing toward each other on the couch, she froze in shock.

Why is Joan here? Why are they so intimate with each other? Have they rekindled their relationship? That can't be, can it? It hasn't been long since then. How can they have resolved the misunderstanding so easily?

"Ms. Zimmer's here? Let's eat together, then," Joan enunciated in a deliberately loud tone. She knew the woman was there to bring lunch for Larry. Fortunately, she was quicker than her.

"My wife has brought lunch for me today. Come, let's eat together," Larry added.

He was taking the chance to show Jessica that his relationship with Joan had always been strong. In other words, it would not be easy for Jessica to sow discord between them.

"Here, have mine. I have fish and meat, so it's more nutritious," Jessica uttered.

She makes it sound as though my lunch for Larry has no nutritional value. Joan threw her a displeased look.

"I'm sorry, but my wife's cooking is really good. Moreover, she's made sure that all my meals are well-balanced in terms of nutrition. I'm used to eating her food," Larry responded in a seemingly nonchalant tone.

His words struck Jessica like a bolt from the blue, and her mind blanked out.

What are they doing? Are they trying to flaunt their love? It was as if someone had dunked her in cold water. She had been nice to express her concern for the man, but all he did was make her disappointed.

"What's going on in there? Why is that woman here again?"

"I don't know, but it looks quite awkward. If I were her, I'd have left immediately. Doesn't she feel awkward standing there?"

"I'd say her plan to become the third wheel failed."

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Once again, the coworkers were gossiping.

"I'll take my leave now then. I thought you had no lunch. Since someone has already brought you food, I'll leave." With that said, Jessica left the room without sparing either of them another glance.

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As Larry stared at her retreating figure, a sense of guilt seeped into his heart.

He knew Jessica had been upset about her parents' matter recently, but he had also thought she knew what he felt about her.

All she was to him was a friend. To make sure she knew about it, he had put on an act with Joan.

"Okay, she's gone now, so drop the act," Joan muttered as she pushed his arm.

Hm? How did she find out I was only acting? Larry raised a curious brow at her.

"Do you really think I'm a fool who can't see through your tricks? Please. It was elementary," Joan huffed.

However, in the beginning, Joan was fooled. She had been wondering what had gotten into the man, but when she saw the food in Jessica's hands, she figured it out immediately.

"That's great. My wife's smarter now," Larry cooed.

Huh? Does he know what he's talking about? I have brains from the start, thank you.

"Hush, you. Although my brain short circuits sometimes, I know how to observe," Joan mumbled under her breath.

And you're good at it, Larry thought.

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"Honey."

Larry suddenly hugged her from behind and kissed her hair.

"Larry, please remember that we're in the office. Stop messing around. You know you've got to establish a good image, right?" Joan reminded as she peeked outside.

"What image do I need when you're with me?" As he spoke, he carried her up and sat on the couch.

"Stop it and put me down. Quick! It'll be bad if someone sees us!" Joan cried out as she smacked his arm.

What's bad about it? We're a married couple. What's wrong with being intimate once in a while? She's overthinking it.

"I won't," he rejected. "Not unless you kiss me."

Promptly, Joan blushed.

"Then... Draw the curtains." Joan pointed at the window.

Despite Larry's casual attitude, Joan was mindful of his reputation in the company.

Soon, the curtains were drawn, and the people outside could not see what was going on in the room anymore. Gazing at the woman on his lap, a grin grew on his face.

"What are you smiling about?" Joan whispered.

"Nothing. I'm just waiting for your kiss," Larry replied as he leaned his face closer.

After a moment of hesitation, the woman finally pressed her lips onto the man's thin ones.

It was soft but sweet.

Right as she was about to stop, Larry suddenly placed his hand behind the back of her head and pulled her closer for a deeper kiss.

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"Larry—"

Before she could speak, the man invaded her mouth. Finally, Joan stopped struggling, having completely submitted to his gentle administrators.

The two were immersed in the sweet kiss.

Just then, the assistant barged in without knocking on the door. "Mr. Norton!"

"Ugh." Joan swiftly shoved the man away and tidied her clothes.

"I-I'm sorry. I didn't know you were in the middle of something. Um. Please continue. I'm going to leave now." Flustered, the assistant buried his face in his hands, about to flee the scene.

"Stop," Larry commanded.

Immediately, the assistant halted in his tracks with a look of immense embarrassment.

Oh my god. He isn't going to fire me because I saw something I shouldn't have, is he? The assistant clenched his fists as apprehension emerged in his eyes.

Don't fire me. Don't fire me. Don't fire me, chanted the assistant in his mind as he slowly turned around.

"You..."

"Mr. Norton, I saw nothing earlier. Really! Look, I'm near-sighted, and I can't see your face from here. So, please don't kick me out, Mr. Norton," the assistant pleaded.

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Larry shook his head and sighed. What was wrong with me back then? Did I lose all my brain cells at that time? Why did I hire him?

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"What I was trying to say was—is there anything urgent for you to rush to my office?" Larry queried.

Oh. He's talking about that. Man, that scared me.

With a relieved sigh, the assistant then swiftly schooled his features.

"The largest foreign manufacturer that's cooperating with us said that they'll be coming here next week. I wanted to inform you about it so that you can make arrangements for it," the assistant uttered.

Why is he coming here? For a vacation? Or is he here to check out the company. For a brief moment, Larry was lost in his thoughts.

"Yes, I have to make preparations for it. You can leave now." Larry waved dismissively.

What does that mean? Is he asking me to continue working, or is he asking me to leave Norton Corporation? The assistant shuddered as a lost look crawled onto his face.

"Mr. Norton, what do you mean by 'leave'?" he quietly asked. If Mr. Norton really fires me because of this, I don't even know what I can do.

That's a weird question. Isn't the word "leave" quite simple to understand?

Larry frowned at the other man.

"What kind of 'leave' would you like then?" he asked the assistant instead. After all, whatever conclusion his assistant reached had barely any impact on him.

"Okay! I'm going back to work now. Please call me when you need me." With that said, the assistant darted out of the room as if he feared Larry would change his mind in the next second.

"What's wrong? Why do you look unhappy? I can see it on your face," Caspian, who was lying on the hospital bed, carefully asked Jessica.

What else could it be? I can't believe Larry did that to me!

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Jessica was pouting as she peeled an orange, looking displeased.

"Nothing. Here. Have an orange." At that, she threw it at Caspian.

Caspian only glanced at her before he sighed. She must have lost her temper at Larry again. No one else in this world can affect her in this way other than Larry.

"How are things? Do you need any help with the funeral?" Caspian continued.

Right then, sorrow flashed past Jessica's eyes. It had been some time since she returned, but she had yet to deal with her parents' funeral.

"No. I'll be informing my relatives tomorrow, and the funeral will be on the day after the next," came her quiet response.

To Jessica, the funeral was only a way to say goodbye to her parents.

"Are you sure you're fine by yourself? Why don't I help you?" Caspian worriedly suggested.

He was unsure of what her reply would be. Caspian genuinely wanted to help her, but he was afraid that she would feel awkward about it. Even if she did not want to accept him, he wanted to lend her a helping hand as a friend.

"It's okay. Don't worry. I can do this myself. I'll be fine," Jessica rejected.

That was what she wanted to discuss with Larry when she went to Norton Corporation in the afternoon. However, to her ill luck, she encountered Joan, and the couple flaunted their love in her face. There was no way she would not feel upset after that.

"Why don't you ask Larry to go with you? I'm sure he'll help you," Caspian suggested.

"No. I don't need his help," Jessica firmly rejected.

Huh? What's going on? Doesn't her world revolve around Larry? Why is she acting so strange today?

"Did you have a fight with Larry?"

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Fight? What fight? What right do I have to fight with that man? He only has Joan in his heart and mind. He doesn't even remember I exist.

"He's busy, so I don't want to trouble him."

Busy? With what? The company's affairs? I haven't even heard him talk about it recently.

After a while of chatting, Jessica left.

The weather was fine, but somehow, Caspian felt a sorrowful cloud growing in his chest. Finally, he could not help but make a call.

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"Larry, how are the things with Jessica's parents?" Caspian asked.

Larry was taken aback by his words. It had been days, and he had completely forgotten to ask Jessica about it.

"I'll take a look at it tomorrow. I've been busy recently," Larry replied.

"She'll be informing her relatives about it tomorrow, so I'd say she'll be busy for the next two days. Do help her out." Larry could hear that Caspian truly cared for that woman from the sincerity of his tone.

"What's the matter?" Joan softly asked as she held Larry's hand.

"No wonder she came to look for me today... Joan, I don't think I'll have the time to keep you company for the next few days. Jessica needs to take care of her parents' funeral. You know this too. She's been living overseas in the past," Larry explained.

Pity surfaced in Joan's eyes.

Although she did not like the way Larry spent time with Jessica, she could understand what Jessica was feeling. She must be feeling horrible.

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"It's okay. You should help her out, but be mindful not to cross the line with her," Joan warned as she tugged the man's tie.

"I know. Don't worry. Your husband only has you in his heart." With that said, Larry pressed a light kiss on her hand.

At night, when Joan was sitting on the couch, a sigh abruptly escaped her.

A woman who had encountered a sudden incident like this would feel anxious, lost, and melancholic. I wonder how long it will take for Jessica to walk out of this misery.

"What's the matter? Did something happen? Why do you look tired?" Delilah inquired as she walked over.

"I'm fine. Ms. Young, how is the garden recently?" Joan asked instead.

"Everything's fine. By the way, when are you planning to return to work at the supermarket? Dustin keeps asking me about you whenever I meet him," Delilah complained.

The misunderstanding between Larry and she have been resolved, and they now trust each other again. Isn't it time to return to the main track?

At that thought, Delilah glanced at her with hopeful eyes.

"Yes, I'll be going back to work tomorrow," Joan replied.

It had been a long while since she stopped working. As a supervisor of the supermarket, it was unreasonable that she had been absent from work for such a lengthy period. It was time for her to return to her post.

With her mind set, she clapped her hands with a look of determination.

Before the sun rose the following day, Joan was already busying herself in the kitchen.

Milk. Sandwich. A banana. Yes, everything's set. After peeking at her watch, she grabbed a jacket and walked out of the living room.

After some time, Lucius and Delilah trudged out of their bedrooms, yawning.

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"Grandma, why are you up so early? Breakfast's already ready," Lucius mumbled as he brushed his teeth.

Delilah snapped out of her groggy state instantly.

I didn't make breakfast. Did Joan do this? Staring at the table full of food, a small smile grew on her lips.

Is she finally going back to her normal routine now? That's good.

"Come and have your breakfast. Your mom woke up and made this early in the morning," Delilah said with a chuckle.

"Wow! Really? Is Mom returning to her mighty state?" Lucius exclaimed loudly.

It had been a long while since Joan had made breakfast for the boy. It was because she had been fighting with Larry.

"Our supervisor's back!"

"Welcome back!"

"Ms. Watts, are you pregnant?" a woman abruptly asked as she walked over.

What? Why is she asking me this question? Joan eyed the woman curiously.

"All right, that's enough. Don't tease her anymore. Joan, what have you been busy with? We haven't seen you for quite a while. They've been saying that you're pregnant and about to quit your job," one of the staff members muttered.

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Seriously? I can't believe they actually came up with a rumor like this.

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"No. There were some things I had to deal with the past few days, so I couldn't come to work. What do you mean I'm pregnant? They're just rumors," Joan hurriedly denied.

"Oh? You're here."

Somehow, Joan felt a sense of nostalgia when she heard Dustin's voice.

"I'm sorry. I had many things to deal with the past few days, so I couldn't come to work," Joan apologized as she hung her head.

"Hey, it's fine. He didn't even say anything about it. In fact, he kept this job for you," one of them suddenly said.

"That's right. Joan, our Mr. Silverman had been waiting for you to come back to work," another voiced.

"What do you mean your Mr. Silverman? He's clearly ours!"

"Of course he's not. He's ours—"

The two women began fighting as though no one else was around them.

However, both Joan and Dustin were used to their antics. In fact, all staff members of the supermarket were used to it.

Dustin's arrival was often the topic of the few women's conversations. He was also the reason they remained working at the supermarket.

At the way they were arguing until their faces were red, Joan smiled.

"Dustin, I'd say you should get a girlfriend soon. Otherwise, I'm sure they'd get into a real fight one day. When that happens, it'll be a workplace accident, and you'd have to compensate them," Joan teased.

Is that so? But the woman I love doesn't love me, Dustin thought as disappointment flickered in his eyes.

"I probably won't get married," he quietly said with half-lidded eyes.

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That was sudden. Why wouldn't he get married? With curious yet worried eyes, Joan asked, "What's the matter? Did something happen?"

"No. How could anything happen? It's just that the woman I love is married, so I don't have any chances anymore," came Dustin's barely audible reply.

Despite its soft volume, Joan had still heard him.

Oh. He's talking about me. Awkwardness enveloped Joan at that moment.

She knew Dustin had a huge crush on her, and he had waited for her a while back. However, it was not that she had a choice in life.

She thought she could forget about Larry and everything in her past. Yet, at the very end, she was back by his side.

"About that, Dustin. If you pay attention to those around you, you'd realize they're quite nice. As long as you're willing to accept them, you'll realize that they'll be the ones you want," Joan pointed out.

However, that was something Dustin did not need.

He had loved only one woman in life, and he did not want to look for another. Perhaps it would be better to say that he was adamant about the idea of only having one love in life rather than to say his feelings for Joan had yet to fade away.

"That isn't my plan for now," Dustin responded with a small smile.

Okay, then. I just hope you'll get what I mean soon.

There were many things and people in the world that deserved love. As long as every individual dared to take the first step, the world would become a better place.

"Joan, come and help me quickly," one of the staff members cried out.

"Coming!" Joan sped toward them.

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As Dustin watched her run further and further away from him, his smile faded. She knows what feelings I have for her, but she just won't give me any chance.

Dustin had been waiting for her the entire time. His feelings for her had yet to die out.

He was waiting for her to divorce Larry. He was waiting for the Norton Corporation to collapse and for Larry to fall into a slump. He was waiting for the day he could put on the wedding veil on Joan's head.

Nevertheless, no one knew about these plans and thoughts of his.

"Jessica, are you done preparing everything?" Larry asked in a low voice, sounding urgent.

"What's the matter? So you still remember me? I thought you were busy smooching your dear wife," Jessica scoffed. Then, she pouted, looking like the epitome of displeasure.

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Thinking back upon the events of that day made Jessica's blood boil.

"Don't misunderstand. You know men, we can't control ourselves sometimes," Larry explained sheepishly.

Larry was at a loss for words. That was the only explanation he could give to excuse that moment of recklessness.

"Yes, you couldn't hold yourself back. That's why you did those things with Joan in broad daylight," Jessica scoffed.

"No, we were in the office, all right? It wasn't as awful as you're trying to make out!" Larry snapped.

"You didn't lock the office door. What's the difference whether you were inside or outside of the room, doing what you did?" Jessica sneered.

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Why couldn't they have just done whatever they wanted to do in private? What were they trying to do? Any normal person would have gotten jealous from seeing that! What with an attractive-looking man like Larry, Jessica reflected.

"Fine. Let's not dwell on this anymore. How is your side holding up? Have you informed everyone yet? Was there any outcome?" Larry inquired, steering the conversation away to another topic entirely.

"Yes, they're all aware," Jessica answered shortly.

Larry guessed that Jessica's anger hadn't subsided. After a few more equally cold replies, Jessica abruptly ended the call. Larry was left on the other end, listening to the dial tone in bewilderment.

Wasn't that just a small issue? Was there a need to overreact in that way? Larry thought, staring at the phone in his hands. He shook his head helplessly.

How dare you! Gritting her teeth, Jessica furiously stabbed at her phone to end the call, then flung it onto the sofa. She stalked into the kitchen.

"Joan, do you want to have dinner together tonight?"

"Yes, come on! Let's go together. It's the weekend!"

A chorus of giggling girls surrounded Joan, their faces rapturous with glee.

"I won't be joining you. I have some things to deal with. Sorry. I'll be taking my leave first," Joan hastily replied, waving them off.

Joan knew too well what her friends were like. Anyone who dared oppose them would be swept away by sheer force, despite any protests to the contrary.

"Don't run away! Let's all go out together. There's nothing for you to do at home, anyway," One of the girls added persuasively. They thronged about Joan, eagerly trying to convince her to join them.

"No, I have to pick Lucius up," Joan replied pleasantly, but with a renewed determination in her tone. She elbowed her way through the group and fled.

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Just as Joan was heaving a sigh of relief at having escaped, Dustin rounded the corner and appeared beside her. "Why aren't you going out with them?" he asked quizzically.

Joan had been reluctant to go, in fact, largely due in part to her fear of getting drunk. She was terrified of what she might do in her uninhibited state.

"Uh... I'm going home for dinner. Lucius will be done with school soon," Joan replied hesitantly.

Dustin narrowed his eyes. That didn't sound like Joan at all.

"Are you afraid that Larry will be angry?" Dustin probed.

Joan's eyes shifted uneasily. Evasively, she muttered, "All right, I'll be making a move first. See you!"

Dustin was right.

When Joan had previously gotten drunk with Dustin and stayed overnight in the hotel, Larry hadn't said a word. Joan could, however, perceive that Larry had had his misgivings.

It was the reason why Joan was returning home dutifully today.

Dustin was left watching Joan's departing figure. His hands, hanging by his sides, had clenched unwittingly into fists. Dustin's face wore a grim expression.

One day, Larry, I'll see to it that you hand over this woman to me yourself! Dustin vowed.

"Jessica, what on earth's happened?"

"That's right. How can something like this happen?"

"Did your Dad and Mom say anything before they passed away?"

At the funeral, a group of friends and relatives gathered in front of Jessica, clamoring for her attention.

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"Calm down, please, everyone! I know that you're all concerned for Dad and Mom, but they're no longer around..." Jessica shouted, fighting both to quell the noise of the crowd and the emotions stirring within her.

Standing a little way off, Larry watched, sniggering.

Everyone gathered in front of Jessica looked like they were fervent, kindly friends, who came to support Jessica in her hour of need. In reality, however, Larry knew that most of those same persons comforting Jessica were secretly exulting in their hearts at this tragedy.

"I'm telling you, they got what was coming to them! They had nothing better to do than to swagger around."

"How is that girl still alive though? Shouldn't she have been finished off with the rest of her family?"

A few others conferred agonizingly in the corner, gnashing their teeth.

The funeral was flooded with mourners and their tears. Few of those, however, were truly sincere.

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As Jessica busied herself with some of Liam's matters, a group of relatives hovered anxiously over her shoulder. They seemed to be on the lookout for something else.

"Jessica, how are your parents' assets going to be split?"

"That's right, Jessica, since you're the only child, they should have left everything they own to you, shouldn't they?"

"Um, Jessica, our family business has recently run into a spot of trouble. Will you be able to help us out?"

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Jessica found herself suddenly overwhelmed with a surge of requests for financial aid. Wryly, Jessica pondered to herself, Why are all these people actually here for? To grieve? Perhaps merely to borrow money? Jessica felt a sudden chill in her heart, as if icy fingers had suddenly reached out and grabbed it.

"Jessica, our family is facing some difficulty as well. We're all family here, aren't we? You won't be able to spend all that money by yourself anyway. Help us out a little."

Jessica felt her blood turn cold. She suddenly developed a sense of loathing for the feverish, groping crowd surrounding her.

How could those who claimed to be her own family make such requests at a time like this? Shouldn't they have been comforting her? Shouldn't they be mourning for the departed, rather than their own financial losses?

"Here, Jessica!" Larry suddenly bellowed.

Larry had perceived that Jessica's relatives, having sunk their teeth into her like a pack of hungry dogs, would not relinquish their hold so easily. Jessica was still considerably naive and would not quite know how to defend herself against them.

"What's up?" Jessica demanded in a low voice as she slunk over.

"Are they borrowing money from you? Ignore them," Larry said easily, giving Jessica an encouraging pat on the shoulder.

Why? Confounded, Jessica looked up at Larry cynically.

"In any case, don't promise anyone anything yet. I'll explain to you afterward. Go on back, then. They're waiting for you," Larry said lightly.

"Jessica, we're starting!"

"That's right, it's almost time!" The urgent cries from Jessica's relatives came, forcefully hauling her.

"Coming!" Jessica yelled back.

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The vast blue ocean stretched out before them as far as the eye could see. The sea was as smooth as glass, disturbed only by the occasional ripples formed by seagulls dipping into the water. Above them was an azure sky dotted with white clouds. The scene was so tranquil that it was almost surreal.

"Dad, Mom. Rest in peace. Don't worry about me. I'll live a good life," Jessica whispered.

The urn in Jessica's hands felt unendurably heavy. Tears rolled down her cheeks unchecked, framing Jessica's face in a portrait of melancholy.

Jessica closed her eyes, savoring her final few moments with her parents. They were well and truly gone now. Within a few moments, Jessica would be left all alone in this world without anyone by her side.

"Dad, Mom. Rest in peace," Jessica repeated. Taking a deep breath, she scattered the ashes into the sea.

Bang! A deafening clap of thunder suddenly roared overhead. Without any warning, torrents of rain began pouring down moments later.

"It's raining! Let's go!"

"Mom, it hasn't ended yet..." Jessica could hear a small child's concerned voice faintly over the sound of the thunderstorm.

"Who cares whether or not it's over? Let's go home. This has nothing to do with us anymore." The mother replied impatiently.

"What about that woman?" The child cried insistently.

"That's none of our business! She can choose to die out here if she wants!" The mother retorted.

The crowd quickly scattered, fleeing towards shelter. Only Jessica and Larry were left rooted to the spot, already drenched by the downpour. No one had stepped forward to comfort Jessica. When the rain came, no one had thought to offer her an umbrella or even pull her along in their desperation for refuge from the rain.

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The situation seemed utterly absurd to Jessica. Unable to contain the mix of rage, grief, and sheer incredulity that swept over her, Jessica began to laugh.

"She's crazy! Ms. Zimmer has gone insane! Let's go!"

It seemed to Jessica that despite the howl of the wind and rain, the harsh mocking of her relatives still managed to rise above the tumult somehow. Jessica's relatives had always flattered her and fawned over her. Now that they stood to gain nothing from it, their past affections were revealed to be nothing more than pathetic attempts to secure a share of the inheritance.

Jessica wiped at her tears resentfully. Disregarding the rain that was battering down upon her, Jessica slowly finished scattering the rest of her parent's ashes into the turbulent ocean.

I'll make them regret ever treating me this way! Jessica swore to herself. I'll show them that they shouldn't have messed with me.

"Are you OK?" Larry asked, striding over to Jessica with a worried frown on his face.

Jessica turned and gaped at Larry in shock. Didn't he leave along with the rest? she thought, startled.

Jessica turned to face him squarely, then asked out of curiosity, "Why didn't you leave? What are you waiting for?"

"What are friends for?" Larry responded breezily. "Caspian's here, too." He jerked a thumb towards the figure standing under an umbrella a little way off, watching them.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2249

Chapter 2249 Meatloaf

He came! Jessica realized with a jolt. Didn't I tell him not to? Why didn't he listen? she fretted. He's already sick! What if he gets worse in this terrible weather? Jessica's heart ached at the thought.

"Here, take this. Let's go over," Larry suggested, handing Jessica his umbrella.

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"I don't need it," Jessica said brusquely. She shoved him aside in her haste and sprinted over to Caspian.

"What are you doing here? Why aren't you in the hospital? How could you do something like this! Let's go now!" Jessica demanded urgently, the words spilling out of her. She seized Caspian's arm and was ready to haul him away.

"Jessica, is everything over yet?" Caspian asked frantically.

Jessica almost burst into laughter at the thought. Everything had been over for her the moment those relatives had turned their back and fled. A part of Jessica's heart had died along with their inhumanity.

Jessica recalled with bitterness how often her parents had bailed those relatives out. Their ingratitude itself was appalling. What made everything worse was that on the day that Jessica's parents were to be memorialized, all that those relatives cared for was the money they'd left behind.

"It's over! Let's go!" Jessica snapped.

"Wait," Caspian suddenly halted in his tracks, tugging at Jessica. He took off his jacket and placed it around Jessica's shoulders.

Caspian's gesture filled Jessica with more warmth than the jacket itself did. She looked up at him speechlessly, her eyes brimming with tears.

It was the first genuine display of care that had been shown towards Jessica that day. A thought struck Jessica that Caspian might henceforth be the only one who would care for her from then on.

"Don't catch a cold. It's getting chilly lately, so wear warmer clothing, OK? What if you fall sick?" Caspian chided disapprovingly.

"I'm fine. What about you? How could you have come all the way here when you haven't even fully recovered? Aren't you worried that you'll make things worse?" Jessica replied in anguish, wrinkling her brow.

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Caspian smiled tenderly at Jessica's worried face. What was there to worry about? What could be more important than you? Caspian mused. He reached out to brush a stray tendril of hair from Jessica's face.

Inwardly, however, Caspian was furiously turning over Jessica's speech in his mind. Does this mean that she cares for me? Is she worried about me? A smile hovered over Caspian's lips as he reflected on that pleasant thought.

It made him even more determined to make Jessica his girlfriend. I'd give her the world if she asked for it, Caspian resolved.

"Why are you smiling? We should get going!" Jessica said earnestly. "Don't do silly things like this in the future. I can take care of myself."

Caspian didn't appear sentimental at first glance, but he was someone who cared deeply for the woman he loved. Regardless of whether Jessica would accept him as her boyfriend, he would doggedly remain by her side nonetheless.

Back at the hospital, Jessica had insisted on tucking Caspian back into his bed. He flashed a smile at Jessica's worried face. "I'm fine. Don't worry about me. I've already recovered and have been discharged," Caspian said cheerily.

Jessica reflected that it was so typical of Caspian to insist on coming all the way out to the funeral to see her, even when he was so obviously unwell. Jessica's heart softened. Caspian's dedication had rather moved her.

Why did I fall for Larry instead? Jessica thought, bemused.

Caspian watched as Jessica tilted her head to the side, as if deep in thought.

"What are you thinking about?" Caspian asked, gently rapping his knuckles against the side of Jessica's head in a teasing manner.

"Huh? Nothing much. What do you want to eat? Let me buy you a meal," Jessica hurriedly answered.

"Meatloaf, I suppose," Caspian said, shrugging.

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Upon hearing Caspian's reply, Jessica immediately ran out of the room without the slightest hesitation.

What's going on? Did something happen? Why does Jessica look so flustered? Caspian stared at the hospital door that Jessica had just run out from, puzzled.

Jessica, meanwhile, had darted out into the hallway, a million thoughts racing through her mind.

When Jessica had been at her lowest, Caspian was there beside her. When Jessica had been at her most helpless, Caspian had steadfastly stuck by her, providing solace. He had proven himself to be a most reliable man.

It was a pity, however, that Jessica was in no presence of mind to develop feelings for anyone. She was more intent on regaining her footing in this world. After the events of today, Jessica had grimly set her mind on building an enterprise that the Zimmer family could truly call their own.

"Where's Jessica? Where did she go?" Larry asked as he swung open the door of Caspian's hospital room.

"She went to buy meatloaf," Caspian replied.

"Well done! Keep going, bro. Jessica will need you to take care of her in the future," Larry said, jovially patting Caspian's arm in approval.

Caspian felt a hint of irritation at Larry's words, which clearly refused to acknowledge the elephant in the room. Didn't Jessica already reject me because of Larry? Caspian thought ruefully. He was well aware that the position Larry occupied in Jessica's heart could afford no substitute.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2250

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2250

"Come on, Larry, don't mock me. You know that the one Jessica loves is you," Caspian answered tightly.

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Larry could detect a tinge of resentment in Caspian's tone. Larry took no offense, however. Smiling kindly at Caspian, Larry thought affectionately, Silly fellow! Can't he see that Jessica's attitude towards him has already been changing little by little?

"Hey, I'm already married. Joan's enough for me in this life," Larry said pleasantly.

In fact, Larry had never wavered in his love for Joan. They had their occasional squabbles, to be sure, that ended in harsh words and hurt feelings. In the end, however, both Larry and Joan would inevitably reconcile, knowing that they had each other's best interests at heart.

"That's right. How's Joan doing? She looked tired when I last saw her," Caspian recalled.

"She's doing fine now. Don't worry. Focus on getting better first. Who knows? You might even be getting married soon yourself," Larry teased, winking slyly at Caspian.

Caspian's face was immediately flushed. He dared not imagine such a favorable outcome, not when Jessica hadn't agreed to be his girlfriend just yet.

There was a forlorn look in Caspian's eyes as he ruminated on this. When will Jessica realize how much I care for her? Caspian thought despairingly. A year? Two years? Three?

Forget it! Caspian thought firmly to himself. No matter how long he had to wait for Jessica, he would.

"Your meatloaf's here! Eat it while it's hot," Jessica chirped, bursting into the room all at once. She caught sight of Larry and took a start. "Uh... Larry? You're here! I only bought enough for Caspian, though, do you want me to head out and buy another?" Jessica stammered awkwardly.

"There's no need. I'm not hungry," Larry reassured her gracefully.

"I didn't think you were, either. When I brought food to your office previously, you didn't take a single bite," Jessica commented, having recovered her wits in remarkable fashion.

Larry gaped at Jessica in astonishment. Wasn't that over long ago? How can Jessica still be bringing it up now? Hell indeed hath no fury like a woman scorned, Larry realized in dismay.

Larry made a mental note to tread with extra caution around Jessica in the future.

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"What's wrong? What happened previously?" Caspian broke in.

"It's nothing. I just witnessed Larry and Joan publicly display their affection for everyone to see. You eat, no, you eat," Jessica mimicked, rolling her eyes at Larry in disdain.

Larry felt deeply hurt by Jessica's pettiness. She's just like a child, with her childish spitefulness and tantrums, Larry mused.

"Hey, then don't come looking for me when you need my help," Larry retorted. He stood up and made as if he was about to leave the room.

Her potential venture in mind, Jessica sprang to her feet. She could not afford to lose Larry's help. Jessica flung herself in front of Larry, barricading his way out.

"Don't be so serious, Larry. Aren't we friends?" Jessica wheedled. Her face was crimson with embarrassment.

"Sure, we're friends. What do you want from me, then? To buy you a meal? Or to invest in your company?" Larry asked frankly.

Shamefaced, Jessica looked down. She found herself laid bare before Larry's searching gaze, unable to conceal anything from his piercing eyes.

Larry had indeed already perceived Jessica's true intentions. He'd only been waiting for Jessica to broach the topic.

Jessica had been planning on founding a new company using the inheritance her parents had left her. However, it would not be sufficient. Jessica considered approaching her relatives for help until they'd come to her first instead, begging her for money.

Jessica needed assurance, someone she could fall back on in times of need. Larry was the only one left who possessed both the capacity and willingness to aid her.

"Mr. Norton, what do you mean? I'm the one who should be buying you a meal," Jessica answered innocently. She fixed him with a pleading, wide-eyed look.

Pleased, Larry grinned widely.

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"Sure, what are we having?" he asked, playing along.

"You decide," Jessica purred.

This almost flirtatious exchange took place in front of a wretched Caspian. Bound to his hospital bed, he could not turn his eyes away from the scene of the woman he loved behaving coyly with another man.

Caspian's heart ached. Larry and Jessica continued, however, blissfully oblivious to the fact.

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