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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2251

It was evident to Caspian that Jessica shone most radiantly when she was in Larry's presence.

Mournfully, Caspian could only take consolation in the fact that Jessica was, at the very least, happy.

"Caspian, Larry and I are heading out to eat. We'll be back in a while. Don't worry about us! Call me if you need anything. We'll be back soon," Jessica called.

Both she and Larry were already halfway out the door. With a casual wave of her hand, Jessica was gone. The room was empty again, save for Caspian lying alone on his hospital bed.

Resigned, Caspian looked down at the meatloaf. It looked sodden and unappetizing. When Caspian took a half-hearted bite, it tasted like sawdust in his mouth.

There was nothing else for Caspian to do but sleep and hope that this was nothing but a nightmare.

Caspian pulled the covers over his head and shut his eyes as if that could shut out the world around him.

"Mr. Norton, may I ask what you'll be interested in having?" Outside, Jessica asked with exaggerated courtesy.

"Up to you," Larry replied shortly.

"All right, I'll decide then!" Jessica exclaimed joyously.

"Jessica, don't you think that Caspian is a very dependable man?" Larry abruptly took on a serious tone as he gazed at Jessica.

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Jessica nodded mutely. She did not, however, volunteer any further opinion.

Larry looked at her expectantly. If only Jessica would return Caspian's affections! he agonized. It would be the best thing that could happen to both of them.

"Here we are, Mr. Norton! I racked my brains to think of somewhere good to bring you. Eat as much as you want," Jessica announced in relish as they stopped before an unassuming restaurant. "Sure!" Larry agreed warmly. He was rather charmed by Jessica's generosity.

When they had taken their seats inside, Larry looked at Jessica soberly. "Is something troubling you?"

"I want to reorganize the Zimmer family's enterprise and start anew," Jessica explained, briefly outlining her entrepreneurial plans for Larry.

Larry heartily approved of Jessica's ideas. It was, after all, a chance for the Zimmer family to jostle for a place in the market.

"What's the trouble, then?" Larry asked again.

Jessica suddenly looked modest. She took a sip of the wine before her, then cleared her throat. As if emboldened by the spirit coursing through her veins, she continued, "Larry, I need your help. You know that I don't have that many friends here, as I was overseas up until recently. Besides, most of the people I know aren't reliable at all."

Larry felt a strange sense of relief at hearing Jessica admit this.

Having witnessed the cruelty of men's hearts, Larry was firm in his opinion that human nature was the most fickle, impossible thing to understand. One could be friends today and enemies the next. The same mouth from which compliments poured could be spewing venomous words of hatred the very next day.

Larry had always felt that Jessica, due to her time spent overseas, had lacked the keenness to sniff out the shadiness that colored all business deals here. Not even friends or family members were exempt from suspicion. It would serve any businessman well to be wary of anyone he dealt with.

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“All right, I know what you’re trying to say. Don’t worry, Jessica. As long as you need me, I’ll be right here. Even if everyone else turns their back on you, Caspian and I will be there to support you. Your father served Norton Corporation faithfully in his lifetime, and I’m not one to neglect a debt of gratitude. Your father may have terminated his contract in the end, but I believe he had his own reasons for that...”

Larry continued and Jessica could sense that every word was heartfelt. She was rather moved by his touching remembrance of her father, a vast contrast to that of her own relatives’ memorialization of his money.

Larry had anticipated Jessica’s needs before she even opened her mouth, relieving her of the difficulty of having to ask him for money. Jessica felt affirmed in her belief that Larry was someone she could count on.

I’ll do it, then! I won’t let anyone down, Jessica pledged solemnly to herself.

“Thank you, Mr. Norton. I can’t thank you enough for your understanding. If there’s anything you need my help with, please don’t hesitate to ask,” Jessica answered briefly.

Larry gave Jessica an odd look, surprised by her sudden change in tone. Just what is she up to now? He wondered.

Jessica’s terse formality had left Larry somewhat bewildered. It seemed as if they had gone from being friends to discussing professional business transactions in a blink.

“All right, enough of that. We can discuss this in-depth in the future. Let’s have a good meal today,” Larry said in a blustering voice, attempting to lighten the mood.

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It worked. The tension at the table dissipated, and Jessica and Larry spent the rest of the meal in high spirits, teasing and bantering with each other.

Suddenly, Jessica paused, then asked, “Larry, can I ask you a question? Aren’t you afraid that you won’t be able to get rid of me now that you’re offering me your help?”

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The question seemed so preposterous that Larry almost burst into laughter. However, he choked it down at the sight of Jessica's pensive face. Larry believed that he knew Jessica pretty well and didn't take her for the sort to be needy.

Besides, he had firm faith that Jessica would soon realize the person she truly loved was not Larry, but Caspian.

"No, or I wouldn't have offered to help you in the first place. I'm usually right about these things," Larry replied airily.

Why does he look so confident? Jessica thought as she looked skeptically at Larry.

However, Jessica did think that Larry was a lot more perceptive than most. Larry could accurately uncover links and meanings between two seemingly disparate events that had stumped everyone else.

"Anyway, I'm pouring my heart and soul into my work from now on. I won't have time to think about relationships and the like, so don't worry. Please reassure Joan of that as well," Jessica asserted unequivocally.

Larry nodded. Anyway, Joan wasn't the type to get jealous over petty things like these. Besides, she was aware of everything that was going on now. There was no discernible reason for Joan to get upset.

"Don't worry. Joan is a lot more understanding than that," Larry immediately reassured Jessica.

Having thus established their boundaries, Larry and Jessica lapsed into lighthearted chatter, accompanied by quite a bit of wine.

"You hold your alcohol pretty well," Larry observed after a while.

"Let's go out drinking sometime then!" Jessica yelled delightedly.

Jessica was a rather avid drinker and enjoyed trying out different sorts of beers and spirits. During her time overseas, Jessica had enjoyed their vibrant nightlife tremendously.

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After a while, the waiter came over to inform them that the restaurant was closing. Both Larry and Jessica stood up rather reluctantly to leave. "All right. Shall we go, then? Are you heading home or going back to Caspian's?" Larry asked gently, tapping Jessica on the shoulder. She was standing at her seat, staring straight ahead with a rather dazed expression on her face.

"Uh..." Jessica trailed off. Before Larry could react, Jessica had already doubled over and vomited onto the floor.

Larry furrowed his brow in concern. Jessica's tolerance for alcohol was clearly not as fantastic as she had proclaimed earlier.

"I want to go home. I want to sleep. I feel unwell," Jessica murmured, already slurring slightly. Clumsily, she wrapped her arms around Larry's neck and hung onto him.

"Hey, Jessica, let go of me. It won't do to have anyone see us like this. Let go!" Larry said urgently as he rapidly surveyed their surroundings for any possible onlookers.

"You won't leave me, will you? Please don't leave me. Dad, Mom, I'm so sad. Don't leave me, please," Jessica begged, looking utterly inconsolable.

Am I dreaming? If I am, I don't ever want to wake up... Jessica thought hazily. "Hey, wake up! I'm not your Dad or your Mom, Jessica, I'm Larry!" Larry grabbed Jessica by her shoulders and shook her vigorously.

"What? Larry? Impossible. How could that bastard be here? You're definitely not him. He's a jerk, do you know that? He was rubbing his relationship with his wife in my face. He knows that I like him, but he did it on purpose to hurt me. Don't you think that's rather terrible of him?" Jessica blearily peered at Larry as she bellowed at him.

"He's not terrible. He's a good man," Larry replied gently, patting Jessica on the head. "He just doesn't want you to continue liking him and get hurt even more."

"No! He's terrible! He's the worst person on earth! I hate him!" Jessica roared vehemently, then slapped Larry violently across his face without warning.

His face smarting from the blow, Larry felt a surge of rage rise within him. Does this woman know what she's saying? he thought angrily.

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“Don’t touch me! You have no right to touch me!” Jessica began shrieking. She struggled to retreat a distance away from Larry.

Jessica had clearly gone mad. She wouldn’t have had the audacity to make such a scene in public otherwise.

Frowning, Larry stepped forward and said firmly, “Fine. I’ll send you home. Don’t embarrass yourself anymore here.”

“I feel sick. It’s really hot,” Jessica gasped. She reached for her shirt, ready to pull it off.

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Everyone around them shot glances at them in unison. Larry was overcome with embarrassment, but Jessica couldn’t seem to care less, singing at the top of her lungs while taking off her clothes.

“You’re the most beautiful...” The woman’s resounding voice gathered many passers-by at the hotel entrance.

“Huh? What’s wrong with this woman?”

“No idea. Maybe she’s drunk.”

“Look at her boyfriend. He’s so charming.”

A few passers-by mumbled beside them.

Feeling the intensity of their gazes, Larry grabbed hold of her arm and dragged her away.

“Stop!” Jessica bellowed in the direction of the entrance all of a sudden.

Her sudden scream startled Larry. Turning around, he glanced at the woman with a puzzled face.

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What is she trying to do again? She has had a feast and drunk more than enough wine. What else does she want?

Unexpectedly, Jessica stepped forward, stretched out her hands, and cupped Larry's face. To everyone's surprise, she pressed her lips against his.

"Wow!" In an instant, the two were greeted with rapturous cheers and applause.

Later, she let go of his face, squinting her eyes at him with her lips pouted. Her brows snapped together in disdain. "What's that? It tastes so awful."

Her comment amused everyone around them.

"Look at her. How adorable! You're nowhere near as romantic as her."

"Be with her then. Why are you with me?"

"I really envy them. This is the kind of love every woman longs for."

The people watching the scene discussed among themselves excitedly.

They admired Jessica's courage to take the initiative to kiss the man, envious of her charming and stunning boyfriend.

However, none of them noticed Larry's stern and furious expression.

This damned woman! She can't stop stirring up trouble!

"Hey, Jessica. Sober up!" Larry shook her arms, trying to wake her up, but to no avail. The woman was completely unresponsive.

Damn it. Joan is going to overthink things if she finds out about this.

"I want to go home... Let me sleep..." Jessica murmured.

Why am I so unlucky? I must have lost my mind when I suggested treating her to a meal. No, no... I'll have to bring Caspian along next time.

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Click! Click! Click! In a secluded corner, a man with a cap kept taking photos of the scene.

Suddenly, Jessica grabbed ahold of Larry's tie.

In the next second, the man's shirt was covered with vomit.

"Jessica!" Unable to hold back anymore, he yelled at the woman. Dragging her out of the entrance, he shoved her into the car.

Long after, Larry finally sent Jessica home. Without hesitation, he drove to the office straight away.

On the next day, the sunlight shone through the window onto the floor, making the bedroom warm and quiet. The woman on the bed stretched herself, rubbing her eyes while trying to recall yesterday's incident.

Crap! Jessica sat up at once.

What have I done last night? Where's Larry? Did anything happen between us? Afterward, she sprinted to the living room, bathroom, kitchen, and dining room...

Phew! Thank God he isn't here. That means nothing happened between us. It almost scared me to death.

Jessica heaved a sigh of relief.

Achoo! Achoo!

Joan had lost count of how many times she had sneezed and coughed today since she woke up this morning. I've bundled up these days. Why did I still catch a cold?

"Mom, eat some medicines." Lucius scampered over to her.

"Okay, Lucius. Go to school now, or else you'll be late," Joan said, stroking his head.

"Sure. Mom, remember to eat the medicines."

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“What’s wrong with you? Did you catch a cold?” Delilah asked while walking over to her.

“Yeah, maybe.”

“You should probably see a doctor.” With that, Delilah left the living room.

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Never mind, I’ll be fine after taking the medicines. There’s no need to see a doctor.

Half an hour later, Joan showed up in front of the supermarket.

“You’re here.”

“Joan, how are you today?”

“Let’s go out for lunch together later.”

Huh? What’s wrong with them? Why are they being so caring towards me all of a sudden? This isn’t like them at all. Usually, they tease and make fun of me jokingly. They seem different today. Do they know I’m having a cold? They’re quite observant if they could tell I’m under the weather without me having to tell them.

The corner of Joan’s lips curled up into a delighted smile.

“Hey, Joan, did you read today’s newspaper?”

“Shut up!” another colleague shouted.

The entire place fell silent, and the air stilled.

Newspaper? I was in a rush today, so I didn’t have time to read it.

She ambled over to them while asking, “Did anything interesting happen? Tell me about it.”

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“Nothing interesting happened. It’s just that the government announced some new laws. Other than that, it’s quite boring actually. Hey, are you free tonight? Let’s hang out.”

Forget about hanging out. I’m so exhausted lately, dozing off when I go home after work every day. I could barely stay awake, let alone hang out. “No, I’m not going. I need to take a good rest.”

“But Joan, you need some free and leisure time too.”

“No. As a married woman, I’m not interested in hanging out. I need to do my house chores and cook after work,” Joan mumbled.

In fact, she could hire a housemaid, as suggested by Larry before. However, she didn’t want to stand out among the villagers.

“Tag along and keep us company, please. We’ll be so bored if you’re not around.”

“Joan, what’s the point of being so hardworking? Men are all unfaithful,” a woman at the end screamed.

“What are you talking about? Can’t you shut your mouth?”

“That’s right. Cut the nonsense!”

The woman who opened her mouth was instantly bombarded with criticism. She meant no evil, but she had been overly blunt.

Immediately, Joan grew alert. Are they hiding something from me?

Despite their effort to keep her in the dark, she eventually read the newspaper.

There were two familiar faces on it. One was Larry’s, while the other was Jessica’s. Below the photo was a jaw-dropping headline: A Pretty Woman Pursues A Man By Boldly Kissing Him.

“Hmm... Joan, don’t worry, it could be a misunderstanding. Just ask Larry about the matter when you see him.”

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“Yeah, someone might’ve done this on purpose or written this for fun.”

“Let’s not think too much, okay?”

Everyone tried their best to console her, afraid that she might do anything to hurt herself.

No wonder he didn’t come home last night. Now I know he went on a date with another woman. They even kissed in public! Is he that desperate? How could he mess around with a woman who had just lost her parents?

“Stop chattering and go back to work,” Dustin warned sternly, marching over to them.

She’s fine. Their words will only make things worse. Dustin’s gaze grew cold.

“Do you need to take a day off?” he asked Joan in a low voice.

“No. I’ll work today. It’s been so long since I last came to work,” she answered slowly. Her eyes were brimming with tears.

“It’s alright. Let me handle it. Go home and take a rest.” While speaking, Dustin took the box in her hand away.

No, I can’t let it affect my job. I’ve already taken many leaves, so I can’t leave the supermarket today.

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It’s just an affair. Don’t sweat it. Nothing is more important than having my own source of income. Joan assured herself inwardly while bustling about.

“Don’t worry, I’m fine,” she said to Dustin.

The man raised an eyebrow disbelievingly. Yeah, she seems really calm, but I bet she’s having an emotional breakdown on the inside. Staring at the woman in front of him, he felt his heart ache for her.

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I know Joan too well. If she has a choice, she'll never show her emotions on her face.

"Joan, I'm here for you if you ever need anything. You can always rely on me." Dustin gently patted her shoulder.

In an instant, a warm and fuzzy feeling shot through Joan.

In retrospect, I'm really grateful for Dustin's companionship over the years. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have understood many things in life.

"Okay, sure," she nonchalantly replied as she kept her head down,

A few colleagues gazed at her with worry written all over their faces.

All this while, they thought she and Larry respected and loved each other deeply. Never had they expected Larry to have an affair.

"Men are just unreliable, so women have to learn to make money themselves. Otherwise, who is going to fend for us if we get a divorce?" one of them babbled on.

"Stop talking. She's already feeling sad," another employee whispered.

Throughout the day, Joan wasn't in the right frame of mind. Yet, no one blamed her. Dustin even got someone else to redo whatever she had done.

There were many employees in the supermarket, mostly married women. Hence, most of them could put themselves in Joan's shoes. They were normally very friendly to her, treating her as their biological sister.

Nevertheless, a handful of the younger and good-looking ones were jealous of her close friendship with Dustin.

"Joan, what on earth are you doing? If you don't feel like working, go home and sleep! Don't stick around and waste everybody's time!" Finally, a young woman couldn't resist bawling at her.

Huh? What did I do to make her so angry? Perplexed, Joan swiftly turned her head around and glanced at her curiously. "What's wrong?"

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"Look at what you've done! How many products have you placed wrongly? The manager asked me not to tell you, but to rearrange the products behind you quietly. I'm busy too! I have a lot on my plate, yet I have to come over and help you. Can you be more careful? It's just an affair! Don't make a big fuss out of it! There's no good husband in our society anymore!" she ridiculed in a serious tone.

She was right. The people in the current society were too impetuous and fickle-minded. A long-lasting and unchanging love was only a lie.

"I'm sorry. Go ahead and do what you need to. I'll settle this myself," Joan said with embarrassment. She quickly retreated her steps and reorganized the items.

This woman is annoying. What's the big deal that her husband has a mistress? She can do the same too. If she really can't stand it, get a divorce! No matter who leaves or betrays you, life still goes on.

With her lips pouted, the young woman stomped away from the area which Joan was in charge of.

"Can't you be more compassionate?"

"Why should I? I was just pointing out the truth!"

"Okay, okay, okay... Whatever you say is right."

Another colleague tried to reason with the young woman.

In the meantime, Joan was still doing her job, but more carefully now.

I got it. No matter what, I have to live well on my own. She's right. No one truly can't live without another person.

Soon, it was time to get off from work. All the employees in the supermarket were getting ready to go home, stealing glances at Joan from time to time.

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“Hi, Joan. Do you want to go shopping together?” one of her colleagues approached her and asked cautiously.

“No, thank you. I’m tired today. I need to rest,” she replied in a soft voice.

“Stop asking her to go shopping with you. What else is more effective than sleeping?” the young woman spoke up.

The atmosphere froze instantly.

Long after, Joan was left alone in the lounge. Lying on a couch, she stared blankly at the ceiling. How am I going to face Larry? Should I interrogate him or pretend like nothing happened?

Suddenly, her phone beeped.

The woman swiped to unlock her phone. Caiden had sent her some photos of Larry sending Jessica home.

Joan couldn’t help but sigh helplessly the moment she saw the pictures. Her gaze appeared even more lifeless now.

Larry, didn’t you say that the woman is only a friend of yours? Didn’t you tell me that nothing going on between you two? How are you going to explain the kiss you two shared last night?

Clenching her fists, Joan seemed a little forlorn.

“Let’s go. I’m taking you out for a delicious meal.” Dustin pushed the door open.

“I don’t want to go anywhere,” she declined, wiping the tears off her face.

Meanwhile, in the office. “Larry, what the hell is wrong with you?” Caspian asked in distress. There was a hint of anger in his tone.

What happened to Caspian today? Why is he talking so harshly? Did Jessica pull some sort of prank on him again?

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Amused, Larry chuckled and answered casually, "What's the matter? I'm at work."

Caspian seemed distraught. It seems like he hasn't read the newspaper today. He doesn't even know he has made the headline.

"Take a look at today's newspaper, you bigwig. You'd better think about how you're going to explain things to Joan." Caspian then hung up on him.

What should I explain to her? Haven't I done that two days ago? I've already come clean with her.

"My goodness. What's wrong with Larry? How did this scandal come about?"

"Yeah. Is Jessica really his mistress?"

"Why did Mr. Norton do that? Joan is so nice. How could he have an affair?"

As Larry sauntered toward the pantry, he heard a few employees who were working overtime whispering to each other.

What the hell are they talking about? Since when do I have a mistress? I love Joan more than anything else in this world! These people have nothing better to do, spouting nonsense mindlessly. I'm surprised they actually have the nerve to gossip about me.

"What are you talking about?" To their horror, Larry suddenly showed up in front of them.

Instantly, looks of embarrassment crossed the employee's faces.

"Hmm... Nothing, Mr. Norton. We're only chatting while taking a short break," one of them replied hurriedly.

The rest of them took a few steps back with fear glinting in their eyes.

No... I'm certain they know something I don't.

"Tell me everything you said just now. I want nothing but the truth. Otherwise, you won't be allowed to stay in this company," Larry demanded coldly.

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“Okay, okay, I’ll tell you, Mr. Norton. But please don’t fire me.”

Then, the employee relayed everything that was in the newspaper to him.

What? Jessica and I made the headline? Did they just say I abandoned my wife? Who made such nonsense up? When the employee finished speaking, Larry was smoldering with fury.

“Give me the newspaper now!”

Flipping through the newspaper, the man read the news over and over again. Someone had seen the scene of Jessica kissing him when she was drunk and made a drama out of it.

I knew trouble would come my way, but I didn’t expect it to be so severe. Not only will Joan find out about it! Everyone in the city will know of it as well.

Sh*t! My reputation is definitely in tatters in the eyes of some government officials.

“This is only a misunderstanding. Alright, get back to work.” Holding the newspaper, Larry went into his office.

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Sitting on the couch, Larry looked up at the ceiling with a murderous look. How dare they make fun of me? I have to teach them a lesson.

Thinking briefly, he took his phone and dialed a number, but the call didn’t get through.

At the same time, Joan was still lying on the couch with her eyes closed. She didn’t bother checking her phone at all.

Beside her, Dustin was waiting patiently for her to pull herself together.

“Alright, let’s go,” the woman said while standing up.

“Where to?” he asked quickly.

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“Let’s take a walk. I feel like having a barbecue.”

“Sure,” he replied. She can have anything she wants as long as she’s happy. Then, the man seemed to have thought of something and asked, “Joan, your phone rang several times just now. Do you want to call the person back?”

“No. Let’s go all out and have fun tonight!” she declared.

It looks like she’s going to get over it soon. I’m glad things have turned out this way. It gives me an opportunity to keep her company. Larry, should I thank you for this chance?

Dustin let out a snigger before leaving.

“Where are we going? How about the beach?”

Joan was thrilled and elated by the idea. “Yes, let’s go to the beach!”

Soon, the car pulled over on a beach. Everything they needed seemed to have been prepared beforehand.

“Wow! Dustin, when did you prepare all these? I only decided to come here at the last minute.” Joan eyed the man in front of her speculatively, feeling amazed.

“I did it when you said you wanted to have a barbecue. I remember you said that you love doing this on a beach while enjoying the breeze and watching the waves and the moon,” the man replied gradually.

All of a sudden, Joan felt touched.

All these years, Larry never knew of this odd idea of hers because he didn’t like the fact that she enjoyed eating junk food.

“Dustin, thank you,” Joan said from the bottom of her heart and tilted her head in gratitude.

“Wait, what are you doing? That’s not what friends do! Don’t do that to me. You make me feel so old,” he joked on purpose.

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A smile broke across Joan's face at Dustin's attempt to lighten the mood. Later, the two started grilling the food.

"Take a seat and do nothing. I'll prepare the food for you," she said.

"Okay. Would you like some beer?"

"Of course, how can we not have beers with barbecue?"

Standing up, the man ran toward a convenience store next to the beach.

The store owner laughed heartily at the sight of Dustin. "It's been a while since you last came. This is a gift for you."

"Oh, no, how can I take this for free? Let me pay for it. We come here regularly. You'll suffer losses if you do this every time we come," Dustin rejected immediately.

Unable to argue against the store owner, he invited him and his children to join the barbecue at the beach.

There were only a few of them, but the beach instantly became livelier.

The store owner took out some glow sticks, brightening up their surroundings. Swaying the glow sticks, all of them sang merrily under the starry night sky, while the children ran around and screamed joyously. Even Joan was all smiles while barbecuing, looking though she had not heard about Larry's affair.

"Joan, let me help you. Take a break." The store owner's daughter came over to Joan.

"That's sweet of you. No worries, go head and have fun. I can handle this myself," Joan replied.

"No, let's do it together." With that, the girl began skewering the meat.

What a cute and obedient girl. Joan smiled with contentment.

"Are you still waiting for Joan to accept you?" the store owner asked Dustin suddenly.

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The latter let out a sigh. Of course, or else I would've gone overseas, but I don't know how long I'll need to wait.

"No, we're only close friends now," he answered lightly.

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"Really? I can tell that this is not the case. Stop waiting. It's not worth it," the store owner advised in a low voice, gazing at the sea with narrowed eyes.

In the meantime, Larry darted into the living room hurriedly. "Ms. Young, has Joan come back?"

"No," Delilah answered in a frigid tone.

She had read today's newspaper as well. That was why she was treating him coldly.

The man's heart filled with trepidation. Where is she now? Could it be the supermarket? That can't be. It's already late, so she must have gotten off from work.

"Larry, can you tell me what you're thinking about?" the woman on the couch questioned.

"Ms. Young, I'll explain everything to you later. I need to look for Joan now."

With that said, he was about to leave. Without a doubt, I want to spend the rest of my life and grow old together with Joan.

"Stop looking for her already!" Delilah yelled at him suddenly.

What? What does she mean? Larry stopped in his tracks upon hearing her outburst.

"She would've come home without you asking if she had wanted to see you."

"What should I do now?" he asked with an anxious expression.

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Ms. Young is right. Joan wouldn't have ignored my calls otherwise. But I still have to clear the air with her. The kiss shared between me and Jessica was nothing but an accident.

"Wait for her to come back. You can do nothing other than wait," Delilah replied firmly.

But I can't wait any longer. Every minute feels torturous to me.

After a moment of hesitation, Larry picked his jacket up and strode out of the living room.

Afterward, his car pulled over in front of the supermarket, which was dark and quiet now. It was already closed.

Is she with Dustin again?

Larry had his guard up all of a sudden.

Every time Joan and I get into a fight, Dustin always shows up on the dot to stay by her side. Could it be that they went drinking again?

"Joan, this is for you. I grilled it myself. Try it." The girl handed her a lamb skewer.

Joan took a sniff of the food, commenting, "It smells so appetizing."

"Joan, do you want a bottle of beer?" Dustin asked from some distance away.

"Sure. I'll come over." She stood up and ran to his side.

"Don't drink too much, or else Larry is going to nag you again. He doesn't like you drinking, right?" the man mumbled while patting her shoulder.

"Hmph!" Joan sneered.

Larry? What right does he have to lecture me? What I do is none of his business. Who is he to control me when he can't even discipline himself? What a joke!

She lifted a bottle and shouted, "No worries, forget about him for now. I'll drink as much as I want. Come on, have a toast for our friendship!"

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Embarrassment washed over Dustin. It turns out that in her heart, we're just friends. When are we going to become lovers then? I wish I could cuddle her to sleep, kiss, and talk to her while hugging her.

"What's wrong? What are you thinking?" Joan nudged his arm once.

"What else? He's thinking about you," the store owner beside him said out of the blue.

Joan felt awkward at his words. Though she knew Dustin's feelings for her, she had been running away from it.

"Dustin, can you help me?" the girl nearby called out.

"I'm coming!" he answered and dashed toward her straight away.

"The two of you are really weird. People usually can't stay friends after one has confessed his feelings and been rejected. But you two remain as close as before! It's as if nothing happened," the store owner commented deliberately.

However, that wasn't the truth.

One of them simply feigned ignorance, while the other avoided talking about it. Neither of them wanted to ruin the harmony between them.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2259

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2259

Joan had once told Dustin to go overseas to pursue his dreams, but he insisted on staying back, claiming to be a patriot.

Despite knowing that he only wanted to keep her company, she refused to overthink their relationship. She believed that Dustin would soon meet an ideal woman who was more compatible with him than she was.

"What's so weird? It's just that we get on really well. Speaking of which, I'm indebted to him," Joan replied softly.

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“Joan, if you had never met Larry, or if you met Dustin first, would you choose to be with Dustin instead?” the store owner asked.

To Joan, this was a meaningless question – it would never happen anyways. If given a choice, she would rather not meet Larry at all.

“Let’s say you never met your late wife. What would you do?” she questioned him in return.

Immediately, he chuckled and averted his gaze.

“Dad, this is for you. Joan, this is yours.” The store owner’s daughter came and handed them a few lamb skewers.

“I never once regretted meeting her. She’s the best thing I could ever have,” the store owner answered, looking at his daughter.

With a contented expression, Joan gave him a smile.

This is how life is, full of twists and turns, ups and downs. Misfortunes didn’t last forever and would vanish one day.

“Joan.” Dustin ran up to her.

Standing up, the store owner murmured, “I’ll give you guys some space.”

“How are you doing? Are you feeling better now?” Dustin squatted beside her, asking with much concern.

“Mmm, I’m fine. Don’t worry.” Joan flashed him a smile.

It’s alright. Every cloud has a silver lining. Things seem more positive now since I’ve thought it through. My conscience is clear when it comes to both my friendship and love.

“Dustin, let me give you a toast.” With that, Joan raised her bottle of beer.

It seems like her mood has lifted. The man’s lips twitched up into a satisfied smile.

“Let’s drink till we’re drunk!”

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At the same time, the two children chatted with each other nearby. "I want to eat chicken wings."

"Here you go. Be careful, it's a little hot."

How adorable. They reminded Joan of Lucius. I wonder if Lucius is asleep. Has he eaten his dinner?

"Don't worry, Delilah is there to take care of him," Dustin mumbled.

She's thinking about Lucius again.

Tilting her head to glance at him, she broke into a fit of laughter. "Dustin, since when could you read my mind?"

"I've always been able to do that," he answered, jokingly serious.

Perhaps it was because of the alcohol. Joan's face gradually flushed bright red.

Meanwhile, Larry barged into a ward and questioned directly, "Caspian, has Joan come here?"

Look, something must have gone out of hand.

The man on the hospital bed breathed a sigh.

"No, Joan never came here," he answered impassively.

Oh no. Where did Joan go? One whole night has passed. Did something happen to her? Larry appeared utterly troubled.

I told him to keep his boundaries and stay away from Jessica. Yet, they ended up kissing each other, and they even made the headline.

Caspian shook his head.

When he saw the news yesterday, not only was he disappointed, but he felt enraged too.

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“Caspian, trust me. Nothing is going on between Jessica and I.”

So? What other excuses does he have for me?

Caspian let out a snigger. I guess not. I respect Jessica’s decision.

“Larry, you don’t have to say another thing. I understand,” he replied in a deep voice.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2260

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2260

What would he know? It was obviously an impulsive decision Jessica made when she was drunk.

“Alright, we’ll talk later. I need to look for Joan now. I’ll explain to you soon.” Larry left immediately after he was done.

However, Caspian didn’t need his explanation. All he wanted to know were Jessica’s intentions.

After some time, the woman slowly made her way into the ward, feeling a little awkward.

Should I explain myself? I must’ve gone crazy yesterday. How could I do such a shameless thing?

She had already decided to give up on Larry, but she ended up kissing him when she was drunk. How am I supposed to tell Caspian about this?

“Um, I know that you like grapefruit, so I bought some for you, Caspian,” she said softly.

What is she doing here?

He turned away from her and looked out the window, his eyes filled with disappointment.

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At that moment, Caspian didn't wish to see her. Overwhelmed with confusion, all he wanted to do was contemplate his next move in solitude. Should I continue working for Larry or go for something different?

"What's wrong, Caspian? Are you feeling unwell?" Jessica asked.

Yes. I am unwell. My heart's broken, but can you even mend it?

The man sneered as he replied coldly, "It's nothing. I'm fine."

It was the first time Jessica witnessed him acting like this. For some unknown reason, she was disheartened to see him in such a sullen state.

"Um... What happened between Larry and me was really just an accident. Please don't misunderstand," the woman murmured.

Is that any of my business? Whether they are just friends or lovers, none of that is important to me anymore.

Caspian said nothing as he stared out the window.

"Please say something, Caspian. It's making me feel terrible," she said suddenly.

The man blinked before he quickly turned around to look at her. Instantly, he noticed the sadness in her eyes.

"I want to eat the grapefruits," he said after a moment.

Jessica became excited in an instant, and she went to cut the fruit up for him.

"Let me tell you, grapefruits can actually help to dissipate body heat..." she said.

That's right. I am indeed burning with anger now.

"Were you feeling angry earlier?" she asked.

"No."

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Yeah, right. You looked like you were going to murder someone. Who are you kidding?

The woman pouted, looking cute.

In truth, he had no right to be angry. He was just a friend of hers, so it didn't make sense for him to be mad at her because of her personal affairs.

Caspian suddenly looked forlorn.

Meanwhile, at the beach, Dustin and Joan were fast asleep on their recliners, and they had no idea that it was already morning.

"Come and catch me if you can!"

"Hey! Slow down or you're going to fall!"

"Come on. There are so many seashells here."

The sound of children playing nearby woke Joan up. She slowly opened her eyes and scanned her surroundings.

Where am I? She rubbed her eyes and stood up slowly.

The beach? Did I not go home yesterday? Is this a prank? I didn't get drunk again, did I?

Sh*t! I didn't notify Ms. Young. She must be worried sick!

The woman immediately whipped out her phone and called Delilah.

"You damned brat! Where are you, Joan? You weren't home the whole night. I'm surprised that you even remembered to call me," the latter shouted over the phone.

This time, she was infuriated for real. Delilah felt that even though Joan was mad at Larry, she should have at least told her that she wasn't going to be home.

"Um, Ms. Young, please don't be angry. I had too much to drink last night. That's why I forgot to notify you..." Joan explained.

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She drank again! A vexed expression instantly appeared on the elderly woman's face.

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