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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2291 - 2300

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The entire situation had Joan bewildered. In normal circumstances, someone would step out to mediate the situation, but presently not a single person had come forward to be the peacemaker.

It looks like the villagers here are truly beyond contemptible! Ugh! Why on earth did I choose this place back then? I must have gone crazy!

She clenched her hands tightly as apprehension brewed within her.

“Ahh!” All of a sudden, the man snagged the wooden stick beside him and swung it at Caiden.

“Run, Joan! Quick!” Caiden yelled as he pushed her aside forcefully.

“Come on! Get him!” The villagers around them clamored.

In the end, Joan decided to escape.

No, I can't allow this to continue! I've got to go to the village committee and ask them to put this right!

Cough! Lying on the ground, Caiden wiped away the blood from the corner of his mouth.

Meanwhile, a distance away, Joan glanced over her shoulder at the man on the ground from time to time with distress teeming in her eyes.

“So, what's your decision? Do you still want to fight?” the man bellowed.

“Hah! You're simply a b*stard! All you do is pick on tourists! What's so great about that?” Caiden retorted loudly after spitting out a mouthful of blood.

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Well, well... He's quite gutsy! He's already in such a dismal state, yet he's unwilling to admit defeat? Fine, then. I'll beat him up until he begs me for mercy!

Thud! Thud...

After enduring several blows, Caiden truly could not take it anymore. As he lay on the ground, he squinted in the direction where Joan had fled.

Joan Watts, will you remember me forever if I die today? At that thought, the corners of his lips curved into a faint smile.

"Are you insane? Why would you do this to yourself just because of a woman? Are you even a man?"

"Exactly! What's so good about that woman? She only has a pretty face. There are plenty of women out there more beautiful than she!"

"Ah, I pity you! Look, your girlfriend has abandoned you ages ago!"

The few villagers who kept up a running commentary at the side all wore sympathetic expressions.

However, Caiden didn't regret it for a single moment.

I'll do anything at all as long as she's alive and happy!

At that very moment, Joan was sprawled on the ground. Agonizing pain was etched on her face as she clutched her scraped knees.

You must wait for me, Caiden! I'll definitely get someone to save you! Enduring the excruciating pain after having tripped, she struggled up and continued forging ahead.

"Excuse me, may I know where the village committee is? This is an urgent matter!" Joan asked as she clutched a woman's arm tightly.

"What's the matter? Did something happen? Don't panic. Come with me and I'll take you there." The woman hurriedly helped Joan along.

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“What did you just say? An altercation? That’s impossible! This has always been a perfectly civilized village throughout the course of history! How could there be such a horrific incident?” the village chief bellowed furiously.

“I’m telling you the truth, Chief! Please save my friend! I beg you! Otherwise, he’ll be beaten to death by those people!” Joan beseeched, weeping.

Upon seeing her tears of anguish and the despair on her face, the woman who had escorted her over could no longer keep her silence. She hastily went over to the village chief and put in a few good words.

“Chief, we’ll know whether it’s true if we go and have a look, won’t we? If it’s a lie, then we’ll just regard it as a stroll. It won’t make much of a difference. But if it’s true, the responsibility lies with us...”

Her argument made absolute sense, and it left the village chief without a retort.

Hmm... For the sake of the village’s reputation, I should probably go and take a look.

“All right, we’ll make a trip there.” The village chief then strode out the door.

“Thank you, Madam! Um... Is there a doctor around? My friend sustained severe injuries so he needs immediate treatment,” Joan asked, her voice trembling.

“Okay, okay. Don’t panic. Keep your emotions in check. Don’t worry, Chief will help you out. The doctor is already on his way here,” the woman answered while patting Joan on the shoulder lightly.

At long last, Joan breathed a sigh of relief.

Meanwhile, the group of people was still shouting and mocking Caiden relentlessly with atrocious comments.

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“Come on! Get up and fight!”

“Hear, hear! Are you even a man? Get up!”

However, Caiden was truly depleted of all energy.

“Stop right there!”

Out of the blue, a powerful vibe swept over the place.

All at once, the group of men panicked. They instantly whirled around and took to their heels.

“Stay where you are! Don’t run! Anyone who tries to run will be banished from this civilized village!” the village chief roared.

In the blink of an eye, silence fell. Everyone stopped short, not daring to move a single muscle.

Thud! The wooden stick in the man’s hand fell to the ground.

“So, all of you are now great and mighty, huh? How dare you act as though you’re the law here?” The village chief boomed as he studied the group of people before him.

“We didn’t do anything, Chief! It was him! He made the first move!” a child suddenly cried out as he pointed at the man nearby who had beaten Caiden up.

“Are you okay, Caiden? How are you doing?” Joan immediately sprinted over and helped him up.

“Don’t worry, I’m fine...”

Before Caiden could finish speaking, he fell back to the ground and fainted.

“Caiden! Wake up!” Joan screeched and wailed hysterically.

There was no hospital in this village. Instead, there was one dilapidated clinic.

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On the hospital bed, Caiden's eyes remained closed, his countenance extremely pallid. The corners of his eyes and mouth, not to mention his cheeks, were stained with blood. Beside him, Joan's eyes held a wealth of anguish and regret.

"Miss, there's no use even if you were to continue waiting like this. Why don't you go and eat something? You'll only have energy if you eat. It's imperative that you don't collapse because he still needs you to take care of him," the doctor advised softly.

"Thank you, Doctor, but I'm not hungry," Joan murmured.

I won't take a step away before Caiden wakes up! You must wake up, Caiden!

Closing her eyes, she started praying.

Dear God, I'm the one You should punish instead of him. I'll bear all necessary punishment! She then rubbed her hands together anxiously.

Seeing that, the doctor heaved a sigh and left.

A moment later, the woman who had previously helped her came and urged, "Why don't you go and eat something, Joan?"

"You go ahead, Janelle. I want to stay and keep him company here," Joan replied mildly.

Finally, only she and a bedridden Caiden remained in the room. Due to her exhaustion, Joan promptly fell asleep with her head on his bed.

"Uh..."

Shifting slightly, Caiden slowly opened his eyes, only to be greeted by the sight of Joan beside him.

Thank God she's fine! And fortunately, she's still here. With a smile curving his lips, Caiden lifted his right hand and stroked her hair gently. Ah, she's still so beautiful and innocent. I'm willing to wait forever for her love!

"You're awake?" Joan asked softly as she rubbed her eyes.

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“Yup, I’m awake. Are you okay? Did they do anything to you?” Caiden questioned without a moment’s delay.

At that moment, a burst of warmth suffused Joan.

The first thing coming out of his mouth when he woke up wasn’t to ask me where he was, nor did he check the injuries he sustained. Instead, he was worried about whether I was injured. What have I ever done to deserve such devotion from him? She was instantly overwhelmed with guilt.

“I’m fine, but you’re injured so you need to recuperate here for some time. Just stay put for the time being, okay?” she urged worriedly.

“What about you, then? Are you leaving?” Caiden suddenly asked.

I’m not worried about my injuries. If she’s leaving, I won’t stay here for even a minute longer!

“I’m naturally staying here to take care of you,” Joan answered matter-of-factly.

He only got hurt because of me, so I’ll never abandon him here and leave by myself. I’m not that selfish. Furthermore, he has already saved me twice!

“Okay, then we’ll stay here for some time. When I’ve recovered, we’ll continue traveling, okay?” Caiden exclaimed excitedly.

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Why is he so exuberant all of a sudden? He’s severely injured so he should be despondent instead. So, why does he appear so thrilled and excited now? What’s going on here? Joan stared at Caiden dubiously, finding him rather puzzling.

Oh well, never mind that! The most important thing now is to take good care of him. I’ll deal with everything else later.

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They were in a village, after all, so medical equipment was limited. For that reason, Caiden wouldn't be able to recover from his injuries anytime soon. Nonetheless, he didn't mind it at all. He even hoped to lengthen their stay here since it would allow him more time to interact with Joan alone.

"Hello, Mr. Owens. As the witness, we require your presence at our village meeting. I wonder if you'd be willing to attend?" the village chief asked out of the blue.

Although Caiden had no idea what exactly happened, he felt that the village chief was a decent person, so he agreed.

After exchanging a few pleasantries, the village chief left the room.

A moment later, Joan walked in with a food container.

"Here, I made some chicken soup for you, so drink up while it's hot," she prompted at once. "I seem to have glimpsed the village chief just now."

"Yeah, he requested my presence at some kind of meeting, though I can't figure out why he wants me there," Caiden muttered.

Naturally, it was to kick out the man who had beaten him up and those people who had cheered that day.

This was a civilized village, so the village chief had strict requirements for every single villager. Those who did not behave would find themselves banished; they would never be allowed to return.

"Ah, so that's why. It looks like the village chief is really going to take action this time," Caiden murmured.

Indeed, this village had a serious and responsible chief. For that reason, the people here were relatively simple and honest compared to other places. Nevertheless, there would always be some rotten apples trying to taint the local ambiance.

"Alright, then. It's your decision, so it's fine as long as you're sure about it," Joan concurred softly.

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It was a realistic world, after all. If one couldn't comply with the rules, one would be required to leave. Caiden was not the kind of person who would deliberately make life difficult for someone else, but he had never been easy prey, either.

That was his first time being beaten up in his entire life, and it was by a ruffian, of all people.

"Here, Joan. Apply some medicine on his injuries." As the doctor said that, he threw the medicine at Joan.

"Go for it!"

Caiden took off his shirt and lay on his stomach. He closed his eyes and gritted his teeth in anticipation of the excruciating pain.

"Uhh..." He clutched the bedsheet tightly, his palms sweaty.

"Does it hurt badly?" Joan hastily asked.

"I'm fine, but do you mind giving me a massage? I'll feel much better with a massage," Caiden deliberately requested.

Joan, however, did not think anything of it. Placing her hands on his back, she starting massaging him at once.

"Is this okay? Does it still hurt?" she inquired again.

"It doesn't hurt anymore. Instead, it feels really good," Caiden replied while luxuriating in her touch.

At the side, the doctor had long since discerned his trickery. Nevertheless, he merely chuckled with a trace of contempt in his eyes. Sometime later, Caiden dozed off, yet Joan was still massaging him.

"Well, you can stop now, Miss. He's already asleep," the doctor commented while patting her on the shoulder lightly.

Hearing that, Joan peeked at Caiden, only to see that he was indeed asleep.

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How could he fall asleep without letting me know? And I was even worried that I would use excessive force and hurt him!

“He likes you, huh?” the doctor quipped.

“What are you saying? We’re just friends!” Joan hurriedly denied it.

“Well, it’s glaringly obvious that he likes you. Honestly speaking, do you like him?”

What the hell? I’m married, okay?

“Uh... Well, I’m already married,” Joan replied awkwardly.

The doctor was instantly mortified. He left right away.

Days went by. Soon, it was the day of the village meeting. Joan helped Caiden up the stage and seated him right beside the village chief.

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Below the stage, a man appeared exceedingly nervous, his expression flustered. On the whole, it seemed that he was seized with panic.

“You’ve got to be careful, buddy. It looks like Chief is really not joking around this time.”

“That’s right. He won’t be letting you off so easily since he has even brought the witness here.”

A few people at the side cautioned Caiden’s attacker with a trace of worry on their faces.

“Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for taking the time to attend today’s meeting. As the village chief, I’ve lived in this place for decades. From its impoverished days in the past to its current status as a civilized village, I’ve always had a clear conscience toward all of you. I once swore that I would never allow anyone in this village to tarnish the simplicity of this beautiful place...”

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The village chief spoke at length. Most of it was foreshadowing but anyone with half a mind would be able to guess his next course of action.

At long last, the village chief straightened himself and slowly walked to the middle of the stage. He then gazed at the villagers in the audience with an imposing expression.

“Therefore, those who beat up the tourist that day and clamored for a fight must leave this village today. Our village cannot accommodate such formidable people!” he declared loudly.

In a flash, the people below the stage went into an uproar.

“Has Chief gone mad? He’s actually kicking out fellow villagers for the sake of an outsider?”

“Exactly! We’re family; how could he do that?”

“Could it be that the two tourists bribed him?”

All the young villages looked at their chief in disdain. Conversely, the older villagers were far more open-minded.

“Chief, it’s all their fault! It has nothing to do with anyone else!” a man from among the crowd shouted.

What a joke! They’re here as guests. Which guest would cause a fight the moment they arrive at their destination? Sneering, the village chief stroked his beard and pretended not to have heard anything.

“Irrelevant people should just zip their mouths. I’m announcing my decision now, not discussing it with the lot of you. Also, a word of advice to those who created trouble this time—I hope you will behave yourself in the future and never attempt to hurt others again. As long as you repent sincerely, there’s still a chance for you to return,” he emphasized purposefully.

If any of them truly understand his fault, I don’t mind making an exception and re-accepting the person into the village.

“Please give me another opportunity, Chief! I promise I’ll never fight again,” the man who had beaten Caiden up promptly cried out.

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“No, you have to leave. You’ve already caused trouble too many times so it’s time for you to go out there and learn a lesson,” the village chief insisted tersely.

What’s there to learn? Are there beautiful girls out there? Or is there money to be made? Besides, my family isn’t short of money!

The meeting ended with tons of people complaining that the village chief had been bribed. Despite the accusations, the chief remained calm and unruffled as though he didn’t care either way.

“Um... Do you think we went overboard in doing that?” Joan asked in a whisper as she supported Caiden.

“How was that going overboard? Didn’t that guy go overboard when he beat me up?” Caiden griped in disgruntlement while throwing her a look.

Caiden’s right, but still, the village chief actually announced the banishment of the perpetrators before the entire village!

“All right, don’t dwell on that anymore. All that is in the past; let’s go back,” Caiden murmured.

Oh well, whatever! I’ll just let the matter go. After all, someone has to bear the consequences.

Meanwhile, Larry sat in the office looking serious as he flipped through some documents.

Despite that, Joan’s countenance still appeared in his mind from time to time.

“Larry, Nancy is back,” Caspian reported in a low voice after walking in slowly.

Hmm? So, Joan has also come back? Putting down the document in his hands, Larry got to his feet and went over to the window.

“How is she? Is she in a better mood now?” he inquired softly.

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“Joan didn’t come back. Nancy came back alone,” Caspian added.

What’s the meaning of this? They left together, so why did Nancy come back alone?

“So, where’s Joan? Where did she go?” Larry demanded, instantly whirling around and pinning a stern gaze on him.

“Well, about that... Nancy said she wants to meet you.”

In the corner of a café, an elegant woman sat on the sofa, sipping coffee with the demeanor of a wealthy lady.

“Larry, what exactly happened between you and Joan?” Nancy blurted.

If I don’t get to the bottom of this, I’ll definitely burst with curiosity!

“What did she tell you?” Larry asked in return.

“She didn’t tell me anything; she just kept evading this topic. You’ve got to tell me now, or your wife will be snatched away!” Nancy exclaimed urgently.

All at once, a flash of suspicion flickered across Larry’s eyes. She won’t utter such a frivolous remark for no reason unless she saw something.

“Are you referring to Dustin Silverman? Or is it Caiden Owens?” he questioned in a bid to feel her out.

Well, well... He does have a good idea of the precarious state of affairs. But in that case, why isn’t he cherishing Joan? Nancy shot daggers at him with chagrin written all over her face.

“Who else could it be? Anyway, you should show her more concern. Women are easily won over with a bit of coaxing,” she insisted.

“I have a question for you, Nancy. Who exactly is with Joan at this moment?” Larry demanded coldly.

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I must know the answer to this. I want to ascertain whether she has actually gone to clear her mind or she's dating behind my back!

"In the beginning, I was the only one who went abroad with her. But now that I'm back, who do you think is with her?"

Nancy didn't mention a single word about Caiden seeking Joan out. She was afraid that Larry would misunderstand and become jealous. Sometimes, men are even scarier than women when they're jealous! She then remembered her life previously. The moment Jory got jealous, I had to immediately rush over and mollify him.

Well, well... She's playing dumb! As Larry stared at the woman before him, a seed of doubt grew within him.

If Joan were truly alone, Nancy could've just told me that right away without concealing anything. But now, she's going in circles instead of answering me directly. It's obvious that someone else is with Joan right now!

"Caspian, investigate Joan for a bit," Larry ordered bluntly upon returning to the office.

What the hell? He wants to investigate his own wife? Caspian did not quite understand his meaning.

"Investigate where exactly she is and who is with her," Larry clarified.

Oh, he's suspecting that Joan has someone else out there? But that's impossible! While her actions recently are indeed not up to snuff, she isn't one who would do inappropriate things!

"Larry, perhaps Joan merely wants to clear her head alone without anyone bothering her," Caspian muttered.

"What's with all the comments? I asked you to investigate her, so just do it! Stop giving me so many excuses!" Larry shot him a glare as he lifted his head, his tone disgruntled.

Fine, fine. I can't afford to offend him, but I can avoid him!

"Okay, I'll get to it right away." As Caspian spoke, he beat feet out of the office.

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Ugh! I have no idea who has upset him. As soon as he returned to the office, he acted as though I owed him a king's ransom. I think he's really loco!

"Where are you going?" Jessica inquired as she ambled over.

"I'm going out to run an errand," Caspian replied without even stopping.

What happened? Why does he look so grim? Could it be that he has been hauled over the coals by Larry Norton? In the blink of an eye, fury blazed within Jessica.

How dare he criticize my man? Larry really has no respect for me anymore! She instantly quickened her pace and barged into Larry's office.

"Why are you here again? I'm very busy today, so don't bother me!" Larry snapped frostily.

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Ah, it looks like he's in a bad mood! Jessica sauntered over and rested her head on his desk, staring at him intently until he grew irritated.

"Say, Ms. Zimmer, why are you here now? If you need something, just spit it out. I'm very busy, okay?" Larry growled after taking a deep breath to suppress the emotions brewing within him.

Well, he's clearly unhappy about something. Why must he bottle it up? Just share it with the class. Thus, Jessica merely looked at him without saying anything.

"Jessica Zimmer!"

"Say, Mr. Norton, you're morose yet you're not telling anyone the reason. What if you continue to bottle it up and explode?" Jessica drawled.

All at once, Larry saw red.

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I'm already in a foul mood, yet she's actually provoking me! Did this woman come here to pick fault with me? He slammed the pen in his hand onto the table, his gaze cold and hard.

"All right, just tell me if you've got a problem, and we'll think of a solution together. It's better than you being all grumpy alone. Besides, sulking alone can't resolve any problems," Jessica chided.

Argh! I'm not sulking! I'm obviously pissed off now, okay?

"I've already asked Caspian to resolve it, so you need not be concerned." Larry barked.

"But you're still in a bad mood, no? Is it because of Joan Watts?" Jessica probed.

After all, everyone knows that no one save Joan Watts is capable of affecting his mood. But hasn't she gone abroad for a trip? So, how did she get on his bad side?

Larry gazed at the lighthouse outside the window with narrowed eyes for a long moment, not saying a word.

"Fine. Since you don't want to tell me, I'll drop it. Also, stop ordering Caspian around because he still has to handle things for me. Remember you're the one who promised to assign him to me as my assistant," Jessica asserted bluntly while dusting her hands.

Ah, so she came because of Caspian! At that, Larry breathed a sigh of relief and a flicker of tenderness flashed across his eyes.

The weather was perfect with a gentle breeze and warm sunlight. The flowers by the roadside constantly poked their heads out in a bid to experience the beauty of the world.

"Isn't it lovely, Joan?" Caiden queried in a murmur as he gazed at the flower field ahead.

He knew that Joan had always loved flowers and she previously helped Delilah to tend to her plants.

"Yeah, it's stunning," Joan replied.

From afar, the flower field seemed infinite, looking vivid with a blend of yellow, red, and white.

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How wonderful! How I wish life could also be this beautiful! Sighing, Joan suddenly thought of Larry.

She wanted to bring him here to marvel at this flower field together and experience the beauty of time.

When she was young, she wished she could hold hands with the man she loved in a flower field one day, watching sunrise and sunset.

“Come, let’s go and take a closer look together!” As Caiden said that, he took her hand and set off.

After a moment’s hesitation, Joan shook off his hand. That had him feeling embarrassed, but he merely smiled and feigned insouciance.

While Joan was indeed every touched and happy at that moment, she was still very much aware that the man before her was Caiden and not Larry.

After frolicking for a long while, a wave of fatigue suddenly overcame them both. They plopped down on the stone bench in the flower field while lifting their heads toward the sky. With their eyes closed, they enjoyed the cool breeze and warm sunshine.

“Joan! Caiden! It’s lunchtime!” Janelle suddenly hollered from a distance away.

“Coming!” Joan called back loudly, springing to her feet at once.

“Shall we go out for lunch? It seems like the dishes at Janelle’s place aren’t quite to your liking,” Caiden suggested, abruptly grabbing her arm.

That was indeed the truth, for Joan ate very little during every meal. She was probably not accustomed to the food there. Even so, Joan was already very grateful to Janelle and her family. If it weren’t for them, she and Caiden would probably still be homeless.

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"No, it's okay. I think Janelle's cooking is delicious. Let's go! Don't keep them waiting." As Joan said that, she strode away.

"Eat more, Joan. You've lost weight recently. You must tell me if the food isn't to your liking, okay?" Janelle said out of the blue.

"Not at all, Janelle. I love your cooking. It's delicious!" Joan replied immediately.

Beside her, Caiden alternated his gaze between Joan and Janelle without saying anything.

Ugh! Why is this woman always making life difficult for herself?

"Here, this is for you, Caiden. You've just recovered, so you've got to eat something nutritious." Janelle then took a drumstick for him.

At that, the two children stared at the drumstick in Caiden's bowl. Smacking their petite lips, their eyes shone with longing.

"Mommy, why don't we get the drumstick?" one of the children suddenly blurted.

"Uh, well... We still have drumsticks at home, so I'll cook them for you tomorrow, okay?" Janelle murmured in embarrassment as she mollified them at once.

"Here, have this." While saying that, Caiden gave the only drumstick on the dining table to the youngest child.

"Thank you, Mr. Owens!"

The days flew past. Caiden was very happy in the village but Joan was rather downcast.

"What's wrong? Are you not happy?" Caiden asked in a low voice, tugging at the hem of her sleeve.

"Huh? Oh, I'm fine. Maybe I'm just a touch tired, so don't worry," Joan promptly answered.

Actually, she was rather disappointed that Larry hadn't contacted her at all after such a long time. But in truth, Larry phoned her multiple times. It was just that Caiden had secretly deleted her call history.

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"Your cell phone is ringing." Picking up Caiden's cell phone, she handed it to him before leaving.

As Caiden glanced at the name flashing on the screen, his gaze abruptly dimmed.

"What is it?" he asked without a hint of emotion in his voice.

"Why are you still abroad at this time, Caiden? Hurry up and come back! Your mother is sick and she has been admitted to the hospital!" Jaden shrieked anxiously.

Hearing that, Caiden felt as though he had been suddenly struck by a bolt of lightning. His mind went blank. How could she have allowed herself to fall sick?

But in the next moment, his expression reverted to his calm facade earlier as he tried his best to suppress the feelings within him.

"Well, she's not dead, is she?" he drawled coldly.

"What? Caiden Owens, is that something you should say? She's your biological mother! I didn't object to you going abroad to travel with Joan Watts, but now that your mother is hospitalized, you must come back!"

This was the first time that Jaden lost his temper with Caiden. It was also the first time that Caiden heard that his mother had been admitted to the hospital.

That so-called mother of mine has always been a strong woman. Every time I saw her, she always seemed invincible. So why has she collapsed now? He pounded his fists against his head, looking exceedingly tormented.

"What's wrong? Did something happen?" Joan inquired as she slowly walked over.

"No, everything's fine," Caiden replied without even lifting his head.

Considering his forlorn back and anguished expression, something must have happened, but he just doesn't want to face it. Oh well, I'll just leave him to it. Maybe the pain within him will dissipate as time goes by. Besides, I can't even heal the wounds riddling me, so what right do I have to advise him? Joan then turned around and headed to the balcony.

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At that very moment, tears shimmered in Caiden's eyes, yet he refused to relent.

No, she was the one who abandoned me first, so why should I go and visit her? Why should I listen to her? What has she ever done for me throughout the years?

Meanwhile, the weather was gradually turning colder in Chanaea. Piles of dead leaves by the roadside made a pitiful sight. As autumn gradually approached, even the sunlight wasn't as dazzling as before.

"What are you thinking about, Mr. Norton?" Jessica questioned loudly as she mischievously popped up in front of him.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2297

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2297

"No, it's okay. I think Janelle's cooking is delicious. Let's go! Don't keep them waiting." As Joan said that, she strode away.

"Eat more, Joan. You've lost weight recently. You must tell me if the food isn't to your liking, okay?" Janelle said out of the blue.

"Not at all, Janelle. I love your cooking. It's delicious!" Joan replied immediately.

Beside her, Caiden alternated his gaze between Joan and Janelle without saying anything.

Ugh! Why is this woman always making life difficult for herself?

"Here, this is for you, Caiden. You've just recovered, so you've got to eat something nutritious." Janelle then took a drumstick for him.

At that, the two children stared at the drumstick in Caiden's bowl. Smacking their petite lips, their eyes shone with longing.

"Mommy, why don't we get the drumstick?" one of the children suddenly blurted.

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“Uh, well... We still have drumsticks at home, so I’ll cook them for you tomorrow, okay?” Janelle murmured in embarrassment as she mollified them at once.

“Here, have this.” While saying that, Caiden gave the only drumstick on the dining table to the youngest child.

“Thank you, Mr. Owens!”

The days flew past. Caiden was very happy in the village but Joan was rather downcast.

“What’s wrong? Are you not happy?” Caiden asked in a low voice, tugging at the hem of her sleeve.

“Huh? Oh, I’m fine. Maybe I’m just a touch tired, so don’t worry,” Joan promptly answered.

Actually, she was rather disappointed that Larry hadn’t contacted her at all after such a long time. But in truth, Larry phoned her multiple times. It was just that Caiden had secretly deleted her call history.

“Your cell phone is ringing.” Picking up Caiden’s cell phone, she handed it to him before leaving.

As Caiden glanced at the name flashing on the screen, his gaze abruptly dimmed.

“What is it?” he asked without a hint of emotion in his voice.

“Why are you still abroad at this time, Caiden? Hurry up and come back! Your mother is sick and she has been admitted to the hospital!” Jaden shrieked anxiously.

Hearing that, Caiden felt as though he had been suddenly struck by a bolt of lightning. His mind went blank. How could she have allowed herself to fall sick?

But in the next moment, his expression reverted to his calm facade earlier as he tried his best to suppress the feelings within him.

“Well, she’s not dead, is she?” he drawled coldly.

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“What? Caiden Owens, is that something you should say? She’s your biological mother! I didn’t object to you going abroad to travel with Joan Watts, but now that your mother is hospitalized, you must come back!”

This was the first time that Jaden lost his temper with Caiden. It was also the first time that Caiden heard that his mother had been admitted to the hospital.

That so-called mother of mine has always been a strong woman. Every time I saw her, she always seemed invincible. So why has she collapsed now? He pounded his fists against his head, looking exceedingly tormented.

“What’s wrong? Did something happen?” Joan inquired as she slowly walked over.

“No, everything’s fine,” Caiden replied without even lifting his head.

Considering his forlorn back and anguished expression, something must have happened, but he just doesn’t want to face it. Oh well, I’ll just leave him to it. Maybe the pain within him will dissipate as time goes by. Besides, I can’t even heal the wounds riddling me, so what right do I have to advise him? Joan then turned around and headed to the balcony.

At that very moment, tears shimmered in Caiden’s eyes, yet he refused to relent.

No, she was the one who abandoned me first, so why should I go and visit her? Why should I listen to her? What has she ever done for me throughout the years?

Meanwhile, the weather was gradually turning colder in Chanaea. Piles of dead leaves by the roadside made a pitiful sight. As autumn gradually approached, even the sunlight wasn’t as dazzling as before.

“What are you thinking about, Mr. Norton?” Jessica questioned loudly as she mischievously popped up in front of him.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2299

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2299

“What’s wrong with Caiden recently, Joan?” Janelle asked out of the blue.

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At that, worry abruptly assailed Joan as she stared at Caiden some distance away.

Ever since he received the phone call that day, he had been in his current state of masking his sorrow.

“Perhaps he’s simply too tired these days,” she murmured.

“Your phone is ringing, Ms. Watts!” one of the children proclaimed loudly as he ran over.

“Thank you, Darling,” Joan replied softly as she pinched his cheek amiably.

Hmm? It’s an unknown number. All at once, vexation showed in her eyes. And here I thought that it was a call from Larry!

Without an ounce of hesitation, she declined the call. She never had a good impression of unknown numbers because she once received harassing sales calls on an almost daily basis.

Nonetheless, her cell phone kept ringing, irritating her greatly.

“What exactly do you want? I don’t want to buy a house or car! I have no money!” After saying that, she was about to hang up.

“Wait! Don’t hang up! It’s me.”

Hmm... This voice seems rather familiar. Joan stared at her cell phone skeptically.

“I’m Jaden Ford. Have you forgotten me?” the man asked.

Oh, it’s him! He must be looking for Caiden, huh?

“Please hold for a moment. I’ll hand the phone to Caiden right away.”

“No! I’m not looking for him. Rather, I want to speak to you. Um... Joan, I think this is something I should tell you since you might be the only person Caiden currently listens to. His mother has been admitted to the hospital and her condition is rather serious right now. I phoned him a few days ago, but...” Jaden explained.

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No wonder Caiden has been out of sorts these few days, spacing out while staring up at the sky from time to time. It's evident that he's extremely worried about his mother. But why hasn't he gone back?

Jaden continued, "Joan, consider this a plea from me this time. I have never begged anyone in my life, nor do I know how to do so. But now, I'll go for broke. As long as you bring him back, I'm willing to do anything for you!"

Jaden's earnest sincerity made Joan feel guilty.

Caiden only went abroad because of me, and it's also because of me that he got hurt. How could I just twiddle my thumbs when something has happened to his mother? No, he must go home!

"Caiden!" she called out to him.

Ducking his head, Caiden dashed off the tears on his face before he pivoted and walked toward her.

"What's the matter?"

"Um... I want to go back to Chanaea," Joan murmured, looking at him seriously.

Why does she suddenly want to go back? Isn't her trip still a ways to go?

"Aren't you..."

"No, I want to go back. I miss Lucius and Ms. Young," Joan interrupted right away.

The fact that she didn't mention Larry filled Caiden with joy.

"When do you want to leave?" Caiden asked slowly.

"Right now. I've already booked the flight tickets."

Huh? Why so sudden? Caiden eyed the woman before him suspiciously as puzzlement gripped him. When did she become so blasé that she's coming and going on a whim?

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Before he could ponder upon it, Joan had already dragged him around to bid farewell to the village chief, Janelle, as well as a few other villagers.

“Joan, remember to come back often in the future if you’ve got time. The children love you a lot!” Janelle urged.

“Exactly. I’m really reluctant to part with such a kind person like you.”

“I’ll miss you, Ms. Watts!” a child exclaimed loudly while throwing himself at Joan.

“I’ll miss you, too, Darling. Don’t worry, I’ll definitely come back to visit when I’ve got time in the future.” Joan waved at them with much reluctance.

“If you don’t want to leave, we could stay longer,” Caiden suddenly chimed in beside her.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2300

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2300

No, we certainly can’t stay any longer! His mother is still in the hospital now, so he must rush back to visit her!

“Let’s go.”

Throughout the entire journey, Joan clutched Caiden’s arm as though she was afraid he would get lost. That, in turn, aroused Caiden’s suspicions.

“Jeez, I’m not a three-year-old, Joan! I won’t get lost,” he grumbled.

I don’t care how old he is! No matter what, I’ve got to get him to the hospital!

During the flight, Joan kept her eyes closed and rested for a bit. But beside her, Caiden was experiencing wave after wave of unease.

I wonder how she’s doing now. Is she out of the woods? Has she eaten? Did she catch a cold?

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When he closed his eyes, all he saw was his mother.

At long last, the plane landed.

“Hey, wake up, Caiden! We’re back in Chanaea.” Joan gently nudged his shoulder.

“Uh... Okay.” Caiden massaged his temples in a bid to make himself more awake.

“Where are we going now?”

“The hospital,” Joan replied without any hesitation.

In an instant, Caiden’s guard went up.

“Why are we going to the hospital?” he immediately questioned.

“Lucius caught a cold. It seems very serious, so I’ve got to go and visit him.”

Is that really the truth? Caiden studied the woman before him closely as suspicion swamped him. Could it be that she knows about my mother?

“All right, you go ahead, then. I’m going home since I need to rest.” As he said that, he strode away.

“Hey, don’t go! Why don’t you go with me?” Joan ran in front of him and grabbed his arm tightly.

“Why should I go with you? He’s your son, not mine.”

How could he say that? He’s making it sound as though he has no concern for any other children in this world save his own child! Why did he suddenly turn so aloof? Hearing that, a cold gleam flickered across Joan’s eyes.

In truth, that wasn’t his intention. He was merely afraid that she was trying to trick him into going to the hospital to visit his mother instead of her son.

“Come on, let’s go. Accompany me to the hospital, okay?” Joan coaxed softly.

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This was the first time she was so tender with him.

“Ugh! I’m really tired!”

Joan was grumbling internally. I’m tired as well, okay? She continued persuading him.

“Huh? Isn’t that Mrs. Norton?” a woman exclaimed some distance away.

Taken aback, Larry’s head jerked up at once and he swung his gaze over.

The moment he did so, he locked gazes with Caiden.

Beside Caiden, Joan was still nudging him, making it appear as though she was flirting with him.

Perhaps he sensed Larry’s envy and jealousy, Caiden suddenly placed his right hand on Joan’s shoulder and flashed her a smile. “Okay, I’ll go to the hospital with you.”

Joan did not notice Larry. The moment she heard the man beside her agreeing to go to the hospital, elation overwhelmed her.

“Come, let’s go!” As she said that, she promptly dragged him into the car.

Throughout it all, Caiden stared at the wintry gaze within sight with a smirk on his face and smugness in his eyes.

How about that, Larry Norton? You saw it, didn’t you? This is your wife, Joan Watts, and she is now with me!

“Let’s go, Mr. Norton,” the assistant beside him prompted softly.

“Let’s go!” Larry spun on his heels and walked into the airport terminal building.

Nevertheless, Caiden wasn’t exactly happy in the car.

I don’t want to visit the hospitalized woman. I hate her!

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“Stop!” he suddenly roared.

Stunned, Joan stared at the man beside him inquisitively as she waited for his explanation.

What’s wrong with him now? Didn’t he agree to it earlier? So why is he now changing his mind?

“I want to go home,” Caiden asserted.

Has he lost his mind? A man’s word is his bond; how could he go back on his word?

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