# Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2361 - 2370

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2361

He had lived long enough and seen it all, so he was now calm and no longer hostile like he used to be.

Hmm... This young man seems not bad at all. He's quite polite and civilized. The old man looked at Larry who was standing right in front of him as he smiled and nodded.

"What do you say to a game of chess at my house?"

What kind of a request is this? Why is he making such an odd request? Larry scrutinized the old man before him skeptically. He began to feel hesitant.

Could he be a con man? Well, this is an era where the world is cruel and unjust. There are cons everywhere we look.

"What's this? You don't believe me? Then forget about it," said the old man. He then rose to leave.

"Wait, sir. I'll go!" Larry stood up immediately and said aloud.

As long as there is a single sliver of a chance, I have to squeeze it!

Not long after that, the two of them arrived at a small wooden house. The décor inside was retro—there was a table with a few chairs and cabinets in a darker shade of red. Several paintings on landscape adorned the walls. There was a piano in one corner of the living room. The instrument was spotless, which was a clear indication that someone kept it clean or played it every day. The house was tastefully decorated.

"Come, sit anywhere you like," said the old man. He then turned to the inside of the house and hollered, "We have guests. Serve some tea!"

"Sure!" Someone answered from inside. From the tone of the person's voice, she seemed quite happy about it.

"Here, we are good pals. So don't be shy."

Huh? What do you mean by pals? We barely knew each other! The more Larry looked at the old man, the more puzzled and lost he was.

"Here, young man. Have some tea." An old lady approached them smilingly while offering Larry a cup of tea.

"Ah, you are lucky today! This tea is specially made by my missus. She doesn't always make tea," said the old man.

Facing this unexpected situation, Larry was like a fish out of water. I am here to look for the shareholder. Why am I making friends with him instead? Moreover, he is such an old man!

"Umm, sir. Do you mind telling me some information about that person?" Larry asked, testing the waters.

"Hey, young lad. Don't hurry. Take it slow. Good things come to those who are patient," said the old man while laughing heartily.

Well, you don't need to hurry. But the same cannot be said for me! I'm anxious! What if I'm being scammed? He didn't have much time to dawdle around here. Norton Corporation was still waiting for him. Joan needed his care as well.

"Let's play a game of chess. My missus is still cooking. When she's done, we can eat while we talk about it. Isn't this a good plan?"

What's so good about it? I don't have all the time in the world to play chess with you right now! At that moment, Larry was greatly unsettled.

However, he slowly replied, "Alright..."

Ugh, fine! He groaned internally. Even if it was just a small hint of information about that shareholder, he had to obtain it somehow.

"Wow, you are good at chess! Did you take up lessons in the past?"

"My dad taught me how to play," replied Larry awkwardly. They played three sets and he won two sets very quickly.

"Food is ready!" The old lady called out from the kitchen.

"Coming!"

"Come, let's go eat," said the old man. He dragged Larry into the dining room.

Wow, this smells nice! He surprisingly found the food appetizing. He had not eaten well for a couple of days. It was not that he wasn't hungry. He was just too preoccupied with his thoughts that he lost his appetite.

"You must be hungry. Do eat more," said the old lady. She gave a whole drumstick to Larry.

"Thank you, ma'am," Larry responded without delay.

"You know what? This young man is really great at playing chess. You should play with him after we are done eating."

"There's someone even more skillful than you? Tsk, you must be getting old. No problem, let me take care of it!"

The old couple was very loving. Their interactions reminded Larry of Joan.

How is she doing? Is she recovering from her injury? Did she eat well and dress up warmly? Is she unhappy? At the thought of Joan, his eyes dimmed.

# Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2362

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2362

"Hey, young man. Why did you stop eating? Are you missing your wife? Don't worry. After you are done here, you can go back to her."

The gossipy old couple teased him and laughed.

Throughout the whole meal, the old man and the old lady chatted without a care in the world. In contrast, Larry's stomach was in knots the whole time. He was waiting for a chance to ask them about the shareholder, but he didn't want to be rude and rain on their parade. At that moment, Larry was feeling extremely conflicted.

"What's the matter? Are you unhappy?" asked the old man.

"Just tell us if something is bothering you. We can help to think of solutions," said the old lady tenderly.

It was evident that this old couple were optimistic people. They may not look wealthy, but they lived a happy life. Actually, that was sufficient for a family.

"Sir, you see... I wanted to ask you about the man in the photograph," Larry mumbled.

"Sure, you look like you're in a hurry. Alright, I'll be frank with you. The person that you are looking for is actually me. Now tell me, why are you looking for me?" The old man cut straight to the chase.

What on earth is going on? Larry looked at the old man incredulously. The shock in his eyes was apparent.

Am I dreaming? The person that I have been looking for is right in front of me all this while? He put a hand on his thigh and pinched hard.

Ouch! That hurts a lot! So I'm not dreaming? But everything seems too surreal!

"Sir, are you saying that you are the shareholder?" Larry pointed to the man in the photograph, and looked up at the old man.

"Yeah, why? It doesn't look like me, right? As you can see, I am old now. My skin is all dry and wrinkled." The old man looked at his significant other, and poked fun at himself.

At long last, they sat down for a serious discussion.

"What did you say? I'm selling off my shares? Who told you this? The Norton Corporation shares always perform steadily; why would I sell them off suddenly without any reason?

Even if I wanted to sell my shares, I would definitely make my intentions known to the person-in-charge at Norton Corporation," said the old man solemnly.

In that instant, Larry was able to confirm that everything was a set-up orchestrated by Dustin.

Damn you, Dustin. You are so ruthless! You would even go against the law just to take me down,!

"Sir, would you be willing to testify in person? This is because the president of Norton Corporation is now someone else, so I need your help." Larry appealed to the old man softly.

The two elderly appeared to be reluctant upon hearing his request.

They had not involved themselves in business matters for a very long time. Therefore, they were unwilling to step into that devious and deceitful world once more.

"Larry, I can understand how you feel. I'm sorry, but I can't help. Our peaceful life right now did not come easily. We do not wish to be bothered, nor are we willing to get involved in any way," said the old man resolutely.

If he hadn't gotten wind of the fact that Larry had been searching high and low for him, he wouldn't have shown himself to the young man.

"Sir, please listen to me. I truly understand that you do not wish to appear before the public and draw unnecessary attention. That is alright. But could you kindly provide proof of your share ownership? You should still have your share certificate from back then." Larry tried his best to explain and persuade.

He didn't have to go in person. Having proof of his shareholding would also suffice.

The old man lowered his head. His eyes darkened as he contemplated the situation. The old lady, who was seated at the side, turned her head back and forth between Larry and her husband. She opened and closed her mouth a few times as if she had something to say.

"Let me think about it, young man. But don't get your hopes up. You'd better think of a way that can guarantee that we do not get exposed at all," replied the old man with a short sigh.

"Very well, sir. I can definitely guarantee that your privacy will not be compromised. Don't worry, I will do everything in my power to make sure that you are safe," Larry reassured. The old couple were slightly swayed by his determination.

They chatted for a while more, and Larry left right after that. Standing at the side of the road, he was no longer helpless and in despair.

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Finally, everything is coming to an end! Larry rubbed his palms together in an attempt to warm himself.

"Over here! Come have a look the child!"

"Wow! Nancy, your child is so cute!"

"That's true. We are so jealous of you. You have a child now!"

The few women surrounding Nancy whispered among themselves excitedly.

Caspian was silently standing at a corner. Looking at the scene before him, he couldn't help but sigh in silently.

"Eh, what's this? Are you sad? Upset? Jealous?" asked Jessica cheekily. She suddenly appeared before Caspian and tapped on his shoulder.

"What nonsense are you talking about?" Caspian grumbled and shrugged his shoulder.

Heh? Why is he suddenly so annoyed? Jessica looked at him curiously. Suspicion flashed across her eyes.

"Hey, what's wrong? Are you okay?" she asked.

"I'm fine. I'm just wondering when Larry will be back," answered Caspian.

Larry again! Oh my, his main concern is where's Larry, what is Larry doing, did anything happen to Larry...

Jessica was rather puzzled. Larry is a grown man. What's there to worry about? That man can run and walk on his own. Not to mention he is strong as well. He doesn't really need others to protect him! With that, Jessica turned her face to one side and refused to look at him any longer. There was a hint of disdain in her eyes.

"Jessica, come have a look at my daughter!" Nancy suddenly called out to her.

She turned and walked over to Nancy immediately upon the new mother's request.

"Oh my goodness! She's really adorable!" Jessica couldn't help but exclaim dotingly while holding the little bundle of joy in her arms.

"She's fun, isn't she?" Nancy asked gently.

"You can say that. She's such a good girl," replied Jessica.

"I know, right? You seem to love children. Any plans to have one of your own with Caspian?" Nancy prodded suggestively.

Jessica's cheeks were flushed all of a sudden. "Nancy! What are you talking about?"

"Come on, there's no need to be shy. It's going to happen sooner or later."

"What are you two talking about?" Caspian was suddenly right next to them.

He was worried that Nancy would blabber nonsense to Jessica, so he came over to do damage control.

"Why did you come over? We were having girl talk. It has nothing to do with you." Nancy retorted tactlessly, giving him a side glare.

Her conversation with Jessica was just getting interesting. He just had to butt in right at that moment and interrupt them.

Caspian answered in a low voice, "I came to have a look at you and also your daughter."

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"There is no need for that. My wife only needs me." Jory walked over to them steadily and pronounced his claim over his wife.

"Hey, please carry our baby inside," said Nancy. In one swift movement, she shoved the sleeping baby into Jory's arms.

Jory looked at the woman in front of him, then at Caspian, and left the room helplessly holding his daughter.

"What did she say to you?" Caspian whispered next to Jessica's ear.

"Nothing," replied Jessica curtly. She turned her face to the other side so that she didn't have to look at him.

Nothing? The two of you were happily chatting away for quite a while. Caspian looked at Jessica doubtfully. There was a hint of annoyance in his eyes.

What is this? She only got to know Nancy recently, and she's already siding up with her?

Women are fickle indeed! Caspian stared at her with a displeased expression.

"Alright, stop being such a grouch. What else can we talk about? It was just normal topics between women," mumbled Jessica.

This means that she's not going to tell me anything. Caspian turned and left after hearing that.

Fine then! What's the big deal?

"Don't worry, Larry. Nancy and the child are both doing fine. It's a girl and she's quite cute," Caspian reported promptly.

"Good. As long as everything is fine, it's all good," Larry muttered.

He could not return to the country for the time being. Until the problem was completely resolved, he could not afford to leave before that.

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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2364

"Sir, have you come to a decision?" Larry asked the old man sitting in front of him anxiously.

"I can give you written proof, but we will not show ourselves," answered the old man.

"I understand. I respect your wishes completely." Larry patted his chest and replied earnestly.

This is great! Things are finally looking up. However, he had no inkling that Norton Corporation was already facing some major crises at that moment.

"Thank you, sir and ma'am. With this proof in my hand, you can be rest assured that no one will come and bother you," said Larry with a smile.

"What did you say? Norton Corporation is in trouble? What's going on? Tell me quickly!" Caspian asked coldly.

He knew that Dustin was up to something, but he didn't expect for him to make a move that soon.

"Mr. Silverman seemed to have canceled a lot of projects all at one go. The main problem is many of these projects are managed by our company, but Mr. Silverman suddenly ordered us to give up on them. There are many such preposterous decisions. I won't list them out one by one. You will find out about them in a few more days."

Suddenly, Caspian hit the wall next to him, and small trails of blood seeped through his fingertips. He couldn't care less about the pain and injury that he just inflicted upon himself.

Dustin Silverman! How dare you stir up trouble to such an extent? Caspian's rage quickly subsided into dread.

This is very serious. I must inform Larry at once!

Without any hesitation, Caspian called Larry.

"Hello, Larry. When will you be back?" Caspian asked hurriedly.

"My flight is tomorrow. What's the matter?" replied Larry in a low voice.

He's coming back tomorrow? Awesome! Caspian was excited after learning about that.

"If that's the case, then I'll tell you when you get back," said Caspian. He intended to hang up right then.

"No, if you have something to tell me, just say it. Don't dilly-dally," commanded Larry.

"It's nothing big. It's just that you need to come back and take charge of the situation," replied Caspian euphemistically.

Something must have happened to Norton Corporation. Larry's eyes widened. He stared far ahead, not focusing on anything in particular. He looked lonesome.

He had guessed that Dustin would be up to no good. As expected, he had made his move.

"Alright, I understand. Thank you. Send someone to follow him around. I am concerned that he might get away, so be on high alert. Lie low and do not alarm him!" Larry hung up right after he instructed Caspian what to do.

Caspian did not quite understand what Larry meant by not alarming Dustin. However, he firmly believed that Larry had his own reasons for asking him to do so.

"What's the matter? Why have your mood lightened up all of a sudden?" Jessica walked over and asked.

"Larry is coming back tomorrow," responded Caspian steadily.

What? Did I hear him wrongly? Jessica continued to stare at Caspian with a bewildered look, urging for him to disclose more information.

"Don't look at me like that. He only said that he would fly back tomorrow. I have absolutely no idea as to where he will go after that," Caspian explained.

Larry went on a covert expedition this time around. No one knew his whereabouts, not even Joan.

In the ward, Joan was on a video call with Nancy. She seemed to be quite happy.

"When are you coming back, Joan? You have no idea how much I miss you." Nancy asked with a pout.

"Why? Do you miss drinking? I am out of town at the moment, it's not convenient for me to return now," Joan explained.

"Are you alright? Why do I have the feeling that something is off?" Nancy asked suddenly.

"I am alright. Don't talk nonsense! Alright, I'll hang up now." Joan quickly hung up right after saying that.

If Nancy got to know that I am injured, she would shout it and the rest of the world would know. If that happened, Delilah and Lucius would be worried sick!

"Hey, Joan. Who was that just now? She has a sweet voice." Abigail commented as she walked in.

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"A friend of mine," Joan answered softly.

Seeing that Nancy and her child were safe and sound was more than enough to make her happy. The corner of Joan's mouth curved into a content smile.

It's alright. Everything will turn out fine! She glanced down at her arm and smiled.

"Joan, I heard that Larry is back in the country," Abigail stated abruptly.

*Huh?* Joan turned around and stared at the girl in front of her earnestly, a sliver of hope glimmered in her eyes.

"What? I don't know the details. You could just call him and find out." Abigail said tentatively.

No! Joan looked away as a sign of refusal. Suddenly, the phone on the table rang.

"Hey, look. It's Larry!" the girl exclaimed excitedly. After so long, the two of them can finally speak on the phone.

Joan picked up the call in no time. She tried her best to remain calm. "What is it?"

"So, what are your thoughts exactly? Do you plan to continue recovering there? Or come back-"

"I won't go back." Before Larry could finish speaking, Joan cut him off.

"Alright, then I'll head over to you after I've settled matters at the company." With that, Larry hung up the call.

Joan parted her lips to protest, but the line had already gone dead.

"What's wrong? What did Larry say?" asked Abigail.

"Nothing much." Joan put her phone aside. Even though she intended to reject Larry's offer earlier, she couldn't deny that she was actually looking forward to him coming over.

Abigail suddenly giggled and teased, "Are you shy, Joan? You're blushing. Larry is coming to see you, isn't he?"

Apart from Larry, Abigail couldn't think of anyone else who could put this look on Joan's face.

As time went by, more and more shareholders expressed their disapproval of Dustin's management style in Norton Corporation.

Norton Corporation's performance had declined recently, inevitably causing many of them to lose sleep over the company's future development.

"Mr. Silverman, we can't let the company go bankrupt! We have to come up with solutions to solve the problems at hand!" a shareholder bellowed.

"That's right. The company has constantly been suffering losses. At this rate, we'll be scraping for food in no time!"

"He's right, Mr. Silverman. You're the president. You need to think of a way to get out of this situation."

In the meeting room, anxiety and trepidation were sprawled across all of the shareholders' faces. On the contrary, Dustin wore an impassive look on his face. He didn't seem to care about the company's precarious situation because his goal was to demolish Norton Corporation all along!

"What's the rush? It's not time yet," Dustin drawled while sipping on his coffee.

"Then, when exactly is the right time? Mr. Silverman, we have all gone through perilous situations in the business world. We see certain things more clearly. If you don't take action now, the company will face an even bigger crisis in the future."

"As I have said, it's not time yet. How many times do I have to repeat myself? That's enough. The meeting ends here!" Having said that, he got up to leave.

These old foxes! When I first joined Norton Corporation, they were tripping over themselves trying to lick my boots. Now that the company is in trouble, they're pushing all the responsibility to me. No wonder they managed to thrive in the industry!

Suddenly, one of the shareholders piped up, "Mr. Silverman, if you can't resolve this, we'll get Mr. Norton to come back. He'll definitely solve all these problems."

The last thing Dustin wanted to hear was Larry's name. Right then, his nostrils flared as anger surged in him.

Damn it. That man again!

"You'd do well to remember that *I'm* the president of Norton Corporation now. As the largest shareholder here, my word is the law!" Dustin's roar reverberated through the room.

I don't believe that the company can't continue running without Larry Norton!

"But right now, the problem is that *you* haven't resolved Norton Corporation's crisis!" another shareholder pointed out.

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Why should I bother dealing with those problems? Dustin clenched his fists in an attempt to rein in his temper, willing himself to calm down.

"All of you must listen to me and do as you're told."

Dustin was very domineering when it came to managing the company. Every decision had to go through him for approval before being carried out. He could be very unreasonable even he was not sure of what he was doing.

"I'm the boss here."

"Is that so?" Suddenly, familiar male voice rang out.

"Mr. Norton!"

"You're here, Mr. Norton!"

A dozen or so shareholders were overjoyed at the sight of him.

"Things are going to get interesting now that Mr. Norton is here."

"With Mr. Norton here, there'll be hope for the company."

Larry walked toward Dustin while exuding an imposing aura.

"What are you doing here?" Dustin spat as he glowered at the man in front of him.

"What's wrong? Am I not welcome here? Since this is a shareholders' meeting, of course I'm required to attend," Larry said matter-of-factly.

Oh yeah? Well, you're not welcome here! Dustin's eyes gleamed with malice.

"Sorry, but the shareholders' meeting is over. Everyone has been dismissed. You're too late," he replied in a clipped tone.

One of the shareholders boldly contradicted, "No, Mr. Norton. We have yet to devise a proper plan of action. We were waiting for you."

"Yes, Mr. Norton. We were all waiting for you to come," the other shareholders chimed in enthusiastically.

Dustin's eyes grew ominous as he faced the rowdy shareholders.

Are these old slickers openly casting me aside? Clenching his fists, he turned around to leave.

"Mr. Silverman, it's been quite a long time since you took up the position as president of Norton Corporation. Mind sharing your thoughts about your experience so far?"

What kind of a fu\*king question is this? Dustin eyed the man suspiciously as he tried to figure out his motive.

"I don't think so. I have other things to attend to. I'll be taking my leave now." He was about to take off but was stopped once again.

"Don't go. I suggest you stay a little longer, or you'll never get to enjoy the feeling of being a president again," Larry said in a meaningful tone.

"What are you trying to say?" Dustin demanded.

"Here, this is my gift to you." Larry shoved the evidence he had obtained into Dustin's hand.

Then, he turned to the assistant beside him. "Hand them one copy each."

"Yes, sir."

Soon, all the shareholders each held a document of proof in their hands.

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"Goodness! What on earth is going on? Does this mean Silverman's shares prospectus is fake?"

"Yeah! How could he do such a thing? This is illegal!"

"Thank God we still have Mr. Norton, or Norton Corporation would be finished for good!"

"Just look. How long has it only been? But the company is already on the verge of bankruptcy because of Dustin Silverman!" The shareholders started discussing amongst themselves in hushed tones.

Looking at the proof in his hands, Dustin was shocked and lost for words.

"T-This... Where did you get this? This must be fake!" he stammered out.

Indeed, it was fake—the copy in his possession.

"Just give up, Dustin. Stop wasting your time fighting a losing battle," Larry cautioned.

Dustin sneered. "You must've forged this!"

Human nature was peculiar at times. When a person lied on a frequent basis, he would gradually get so wrapped up in his own lies that he started believing everything he said and did.

"Stop lying to yourself! I bet you don't even know what that shareholder's name is, how old he is, and where he is now, do you?" Larry refuted.

"No. Impossible. You're lying!" Dustin snarled, his emotions spiraling out of control.

"Hey, this proof was given to Mr. Norton by that shareholder who has disappeared for a long time."

"I must say that Mr. Norton is really capable. He even managed to track down that shareholder!"

"Exactly my thoughts! This young man has a promising future ahead of him! I feel at ease leaving Norton Corporation in his hands."

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"You're just here to stir up trouble again. Well, let me tell you something. We won't fall for your lies. Do you think you can trick us with this falsified proof? We're not three-year-old kids," Dustin said crudely.

Isn't he insulting the intelligence of three-year-old kids by saying this? Larry's lips curled into a sneer as he looked at the other man with disdain.

"Alright. I'm sure everyone has seen the proof. That's right. I've found the shareholder who disappeared, and he hasn't sold off his shares, which means he remains a shareholder at Norton Corporation."

The meeting room instantly fell into a pin-drop silence; no one dared to make a sound.

Soon, everyone saw through Dustin's intentions. Naturally, none of them would support him.

"You can go now," Larry asserted. He considered himself merciful for not calling the cops to turn Dustin in.

Narrowing his eyes, he added, "Also, don't ever appear before me again."

"You gave me this so-called proof and implied that my document of purchase is fake. Then, let me ask you. How can you prove that yours is real?" Dustin questioned in a threatening tone.

Larry saw that coming, so of course, he came fully prepared.

"I have a recorded statement of the witness describing about Norton Corporation's entire development process..." he declared.

This time, Dustin had no way to refute. Since things had already escalated to this point, there was no way around it anymore.

"Dustin Silverman, I have never expected you to stoop so low!"

"This is outrageous!"

"What are you still doing here? Have you no shame? Get lost!"

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The meeting room descended into chaos as their criticisms grew louder and harsher, leaving Dustin utterly humiliated.

What a bunch of realistic old foxes! Dustin's eyes glinted coldly as he struggled to maintain his cool

"Good job, Larry Norton!" he spat, then left the company right after.

Henceforth, Larry returned to Norton Corporation and began handling the problems the company was currently facing.

"Mr. Norton, what do you think we should do now?"

"Yes. That b\*stard, Silverman, has already rejected so many projects," added another shareholder. After dismissing them, Larry went back to his office. A trace of worry crept into his heart as he looked at the documents in front of him.

Damn it, Caspian! Something so serious happened but you didn't even think about telling me about it sooner? So much time has been wasted!

"Larry, you're really back!" Caspian rejoiced right after he barged into the office.

"Mm," Larry responded without even lifting his head.

Then, he demanded in a disgruntled tone, "What have you been doing all this time? Didn't I tell you to keep an eye on the company? Why didn't you inform me about all this?"

He knew that Caspian was worried about him, but if certain issues were left unattended for too long, it would lead to severe consequences.

Caspian huffed out an awkward laugh and played things down. "I know you're worried about Norton Corporation, but isn't everything fine now? Don't worry. If the situation was really bad, I would've told you a long time ago."

You're always right, aren't you? Larry shot him a look but didn't comment.

"Oh ho! Who might this be?" A woman's voice pierced through the silence just then.

Smirking, Jessica asked, "Do you miss me, Larry?" Then, she bounded across the distance and hugged him tightly.

"Hey, watch how you behave. This is the office. There are eyes everywhere," Larry warned in a low voice as he tried shrugging her arms off.

"Aww, what's the matter, Larry. Don't you miss me?" Jessica purred.

Larry countered, "Give me one reason why I should miss you."

Ugh. Forget it. I'll stop messing with him.

"How have you been? Good? Has the matter been resolved?" Jessica queried.

"I'm good. If you leave, I'll feel even better," Larry answered brusquely.

What the hell? We haven't seen each other in so long but he's still a block of ice!

Caspian's face turned grim when he witnessed this scene.

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What the hell is this woman thinking? Caspian's heart sank slightly and he announced, "I'll get going now."

Then, he got to his feet to leave.

"Hey, where are you going?" Jessica blurted out.

What the hell? Why does he want to leave as soon as I got here?

"I have work to do." With a nod, he excused himself.

"Hey, take her away while you're at it," Larry called out.

Caspian looked over his shoulder at Larry, then at Jessica, hesitating slightly. Jessica pursed her lips in embarrassment and countered, "Alright, I'll leave on my own."

Without waiting for a response, she strode out of the office.

Looking in the direction she left, Caspian cursed under his breath before moving to catch up with her.

He grabbed her arm in a bone-crushing grip and growled, "Jessica, tell me now. What exactly are you trying to do?"

What now? Jessica swiveled around to study the man, slightly intrigued.

"I'm not planning anything. Now let go! You're hurting me!" she snapped while struggling to break free from his grip.

Then why was she acting so intimate with Larry? Why does she miss him so much?

"Do you still have feelings for Larry?" Caspian asked out of the blue.

What kind of question is that? I see him as a brother. Am I not allowed to care for him?

"Yes. He's like a brother to me. Not to mention, he's helped me so much. Is it wrong to care for him?" she yelled angrily.

That's it? Is it really that simple though? Caspian scrutinized the woman in front of him and scoffed.

"You're probably happy that Larry and Joan have divorced, right? Well, now's your chance. You can pursue him to your heart's content now that he's single again."

What the f\*\*k? Is this man daft or something? You're the one I like, dumba\*\*! Not Larry! It's been so long and he still can't tell?

"Caspian, let me go. I don't feel like talking to you now," Jessica uttered icily.

"Then what do you feel like doing? Buying Larry a gift? Bringing him lunch?" Caspian said bitterly. This jerk! I can't believe he suspects that there's something going on between Larry and me!

Jessica abruptly bent down and sank her teeth into his arm.

"Ah!" Caspian exclaimed and finally loosened his hold on her.

And he said he loves me? It's all just a load of crap. How is he going to pursue me when he doesn't even understand me? Jessica fumed as she stormed away.

Larry ambled over just then and asked in a displeased tone, "What were the two of you doing?"

Indeed, Caspian had overreacted earlier. To make matters worse, it was at the office.

Lowering his head, he replied in an apologetic tone, "I wasn't thinking straight, Larry."

"Settle your issues with her in private," Larry advised and left right after.

Meanwhile, Jessica had driven herself to the beach after fleeing the company. At that moment, she sat alone on the sand, staring at the small island a short distance away with sad eyes.

She was stuck in a dilemma. On the one hand, she liked Caspian and wanted to be his girlfriend, but she was afraid that being in a relationship would affect her career.

When her phone rang, she glanced at the caller ID and immediately put the call on speaker.

"Where have you run off to?" came Larry's deep voice.

"The beach," she replied.

"Mm. Wanna grab a meal together?"

"Sure. You come over then!" Jessica directly ended the call and went back to wallowing in her misery.

Some things required a third party to act as the mediator. Otherwise, the relationship between Caspian and Jessica would only continue going downhill.

Noticing the darkening sky, Larry glanced at his watch. Then, he picked up his coat and left his office

"That's enough. Hurry up and eat your food!" Larry commanded.

Why is he always so fierce? Jessica shot him a dirty look but didn't refute, pushing around her food as she took small bites.

"When are you two going to make up?" he asked.

Jessica's hands paused in their action, and she zoned out slightly. Is there still a chance between Caspian and me? Sighing softly, she answered, "I don't know."

The atmosphere turned a little awkward as silence blanketed them.

In the end, Larry broke the silence. "One is too afraid to confess, and the other is too afraid to accept it. Are you two going to continue being like this?"

Well, what else can we do? Ugh. Now is not the time to discuss my disastrous love life! She stabbed her fork into a piece of meat and stuffed it inside her mouth.

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"I still have my career to think about," Jessica declared after swallowing her food.

Who said you can't have both career and love? Larry studied her quietly, his brows creasing with worry.

"Get Caspian to help you with your career." In fact, this was the perfect way to get the best of both worlds. Not only could it bring them closer, it wouldn't affect Jessica's career either.

But for some inexplicable reason, Jessica couldn't muster up the courage to accept Caspian.

"Larry, to be honest, I think I have a phobia of falling in love. I feel very insecure, and I'm scared!" Finally, she managed the force these words out.

She felt comfortable around Caspian, but the thought of actually being in a relationship with him scared the daylights out of her.

"What are you afraid of? That Caspian might leave you? Or the other way around?" Larry asked straightforwardly.

The woman in front of him had lost both her parents. Without anyone to rely on, Larry could understand where her fear stemmed from. What he couldn't understand was why she refused to give Caspian a chance to protect and take care of her.

Jessica pursed her lips in frustration and replied softly, "I don't know what I'm afraid of either."

It was completely normal for a woman to feel insecure, but if it was to the point of avoiding her own feelings, then something had to be done.

"When do you plan to face your feelings?" Larry continued probing.

Jessica's eyes turned slightly misty because she didn't have the answer to his question. She didn't know when she would finally open up and accept Caspian, or how long he would be willing to wait for her.

The atmosphere was somber and their conversation dull.

Despite that, this meal wasn't completely in vain as Larry came to have a deeper understanding of the woman seated across from him.

The next morning, sunlight poured into the room and illuminated the woman in bed. Jessica slowly peeled open her eyes and massaged her temples, trying to clear her hazy mind.

Grabbing her phone, she realized that Caspian had called her numerous times the previous night.

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The sight of all his missed calls tugged on Jessica's heartstrings.

There's really nothing to complain about him. I should try to accept him, right? Jessica gave herself a mental pep talk while drawing the curtains open.

Her phone rang again. Unsurprisingly, it was Caspian. "Where are you? I'll come pick you up," came his anxious voice.

Jessica quickly turned him down. "It's fine. I can go over there myself."

"No. The weather has changed and it is cold today. I brought you a coat."

Jessica felt her throat close up with emotion. For a while, she couldn't formulate a proper response. No one has ever cared about me like he does.

"So where are you?" Caspian sounded slightly out of breath on the other end of the line.

"I'm at a hotel..." The previous night, Larry had sent her to a hotel by the beach, then gone straight to look for Caspian. He revealed everything to Caspian. That was why the latter was so anxious to get ahold of her.

Back in the office, Larry was tapping away on the keyboard, hard at work. Meanwhile, all the employees were doing their respective jobs outside his office.

Norton Corporation returned to how it was before. No one slacked off, complained, or slandered anyone.

This was all because of Dustin's departure and Larry's return.

"Mr. Norton, these are the proposals for some of our recent projects. Please take a look at them," his assistant came in and reported with an excited gleam in her eyes.

"Alright," Larry replied curtly and sipped on his coffee.

. . .

At the same time, Joan was still lying on her hospital bed while flipping through a magazine. However, her attention was diverted as indignation flickered in her eyes.

Why hasn't he called me? Glancing at her phone on the bedside table, an adorable pout formed on her lips.

"Are you waiting for someone to call you?" Abigail asked with an impish grin.

"No." Joan's denial came almost immediately.

Fine. I won't ask anymore or she might get upset again. Abigail picked up the thermos flask and walked out of the ward.

Suddenly, Joan's train of thought was interrupted by a voice just outside the door. "Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't mean it!"

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"Help! Someone fell down!" The unfamiliar female voice sounded again.

Apart from the woman's shouts, Joan could vaguely make out a man's grunts, which sounded very frail to her ears.

Oddly, there was no one passing by the area at that moment.

The woman's cry for help grew more frantic as the man's grunts grew weaker.

What's going on? Joan got down from the bed and slowly made her way to the door.

There, she saw a young man sprawled on the ground, unable to get up no matter how hard he tried. The person who bumped into him was a thin-looking female patient. Clearly, she didn't have enough strength to help him up. Joan stepped forward without hesitation and used all of her energy to help the man up from the ground.

"Are you okay?" she asked the man with concern written on her face.

The man slowly raised his head and met her gaze with a smile.

He had well-defined features, a row of pearly white teeth, and a pair of dark, alluring eyes. Under different circumstances, Joan's heart might have even fluttered at the sight of him, but all she did was make an observation. Mm. He's a good-looking man.

The man maintained his smile and expressed his gratitude. "Thank you."

"You're welcome. C'mon, I'll take you back." Joan supported the man back to his own ward.

"My name is Jake Wilson. What's yours?" he asked in a soft voice.

"Joan Watts," she answered with a smile.

The man's heart skipped a beat at the sight of her sweet smile. Unable to stop himself, he gushed, "Joan Watts, you're really pretty, and kind too."

Joan suddenly felt a little shy after being praised like that.

Abigail came back with the thermos flask in her hand right then and called out in an unhappy tone, "Joan!"

"Huh? I'll get going now." She instantly spun on her heels and tugged Abigail away.

Back in Joan's ward, Abigail questioned in a stern voice, "What were you doing earlier?"

"That man fell down, so I helped him back to his ward. That's all," Joan clarified.

Really? Abigail circled her several times, surveying her with narrowed eyes as though she was a criminal suspect.

"Joan, just so you know. Women during ancient times were very particular about their chastity-"

"Alright, alright, stop it. You're still young, so you don't know anything. It's not what you think it is!" Joan emphasized, slightly vexed.

Lately, Abigail had been constantly trying to talk her into getting back together with Larry, and that annoyed her.

Just then, Jake came in and called out tentatively, "Joan?"

"Hi, come and have a seat," Joan urged.

Abigail was visibly dissatisfied upon seeing how the man had invited himself in.

"Abigail, quick. Pour Jake a glass of water," Joan instructed from her position on the bed.

"Are you thirsty, sir?" Abigail asked in a flat voice.

Jake felt slightly awkward faced with her guestion.

"No, I'm fine," he answered warily.

"I won't be pouring you a glass of water then." Abigail left right after saying that.

That girl clearly did it on purpose! Joan stared at Abigail's retreating figure, slightly mad.

"She's still young. Please don't mind her," she explained to the man apologetically.

"Of course not." Jake smiled.

The two chatted for a bit and came to know each other better. He seemed like quite a decent person, so Joan thought he was worth befriending. However, the man had something else in mind; he wanted Joan to be his girlfriend.

After he went back to his ward, Abigail walked in with dinner in hand and said, "Joan, that man likes you."

"Don't spout nonsense. What if someone heard you?" Joan chided softly.

Who knows? Jake might have a girlfriend. Besides, there's no room for anyone else in my heart except for Larry, and being divorced won't change that.

"I'm serious. You know bystanders always see things more clearly, right? You need to watch out," Abigail muttered.

Joan closed the magazine in her hand and looked out the window, recalling her interaction with Jake earlier. As far as she was concerned, they didn't say or do anything that crossed the line.

Yeah. This girl is losing it! After reassuring herself, she got up from the bed and headed to the washroom.