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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2571 - 2580

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2571

"Why are you here? Are you feeling better now?" Joan asked with concern.

"I'm doing great. I heard that you opened a photography studio, so I came to check it out," Dustin said.

"I didn't open it, but took over this business from someone else," she explained with embarrassment.

"Can you cope with the work alone?" he asked.

"What are you talking about? Aren't we with her?" a photographer yelled.

"I have a team," Joan swiftly comforted him.

Yes, a team which is going to disband soon. Glancing around, Dustin found the place familiar, since everything remained unchanged. He had been here before, but the former owner looked down on him.

"What brings you here?" Joan asked in bewilderment.

"Nothing. It's just that I've not seen you for a long while, so I'm here to see you," he said while rubbing his hands together.

Beside her, two women's prying eyes landed on him. Noticing their reactions, Joan quickly ushered Dustin into her office.

"I heard that something happened to the photography studio before."

"Yes, I've already lodged a police report, but the cops have yet to find out anything," the woman replied.

They're definitely not going to find anything, because I've covered it up perfectly.

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“Joan, are you tired? If you don’t mind, I can come and help you out,” he asked tentatively.

“Not really, I’m not tired,” she answered lightly. I want nothing to do with this man.

“What I mean is...”

“Don’t worry, Dustin. I’m alright. Besides, Larry will give me a hand.” Joan interrupted him in mid-sentence.

Great! She relies on Larry so much!

The two chatted away idly, and the atmosphere was rather cringeworthy.

“Okay. If you face any problem, you can call me. I’m quite knowledgeable about this,” the man said.

“Okay,” she replied half-heartedly.

In fact, Dustin himself knew full well that she would never ask for his help, no matter how severe her problem was.

Finally, much to her relief, the man left the photography studio.

“Ms. Watts, who’s that?” An assistant came over and asked inquisitively.

“He’s a friend of mine,” she answered nonchalantly.

“May I have his contact number?” the assistant asked bashfully, with her head bowed.

Joan lifted her head and said with a smile. “Of course. I wish you success.”

After leaving the photography studio, Dustin lingered in a corner nearby in a dilemma, devising a meticulous scheme. Nonetheless, it seemed like he couldn’t bear to do it.

“What would you like to do?” a ferocious-looking fellow beside him asked.

Standing on a stony pathway, he hesitated silently for a long time.

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Sometimes, he couldn't do things as he pleased, especially when his beloved woman was involved.

Finally, Dustin spoke, "Put everything on hold first."

"Mr. Silverman, if you wait any longer, the photography studio might never be yours," the man urged.

"Previously, its business stopped growing, but a woman named Joan Watts took over it, and the photography studio is flourishing. If we do nothing about it, I'm afraid..." the man continued reminding him.

As a man, he was supposed to focus on his career. Yet, he cared more about Joan. Otherwise, he wouldn't have returned from overseas.

"You may go now. I'll contact you again." Dustin took out a cigarette.

Previously, between his career and love, Dustin would've chosen the latter without a second thought. But now he needed to mull things over before deciding.

If he chose his career, he would lose Joan. However, if he decided to support her, not only would he lose his career, but he might never win her heart too.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2572

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Dustin knew that it was a very realistic problem, just that he could not deal with it with an iron fist.

At home, he was engaged in a pensive mood and did not realize the door was being opened. Suddenly, a woman's voice startled him. "Dustin, between women and career, which one would you choose?"

He turned to the direction of the familiar voice. When did she return?

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“What’s wrong? Are you very surprised to see me?” Abelyn approached him

“You...” he pointed at her and stammered.

“Forget about when I came back and cut to the chase. I’m asking you, between the photography studio and Joan, which one would you choose?” she asked him directly.

Dustin loved Joan as much as he desired the photography studio. He turned to look out the window and spaced out.

“All right, I’ve got my answer.” Abelyn walked over and sat on the sofa.

“Let’s drop that topic. Why are you back?” Dustin attempted to change the subject.

“I won’t be leaving anymore. This time, I’ll stay here permanently,” she answered casually.

“Have you decided?” he queried.

“Yes, I’ve arranged everything, including shifting the company headquarters back to the country.”

Finally, she’s back. Staring at the woman before him, Dustin felt sorry for her.

He knew how much that woman had suffered. Had she not been utterly disappointed, she would not have returned so easily.

“What about him?”

“Dead,” she gave a short reply while exuding a disquieting aura.

He fell silent and subsequently headed to the kitchen.

“You can cook?” the astounded woman asked from the living room.

“Only when you’re here,” the man answered.

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Abelyn was Dustin's best friend since college. They used to discuss all academics matters together and were seen by other classmates as the two top students. Even though they spent a lot of time together, no one had ever crossed the friendship line. This was because Dustin had never viewed Abelyn as a woman. Likewise, Abelyn had never seen him as a man.

"What would you like to eat? Braised eggplant?"

"Aww... you still remember my favorite." She smiled while walking toward the kitchen.

Both of them chatted freely while preparing dinner.

"So many years have passed, it's time for you to let go," Abelyn said it on purpose at the dining table.

"But I can't," Dustin replied while digging in.

Indeed, it's easier said than done. She empathized with him.

"What are your plans after returning? Are you staying in the hotel?" he lifted his head and asked.

"Well, I have you. Why? Am I not welcome?" she teased.

Pfft!

Dustin spat out a mouthful of rice and some even got onto the hair of the woman sitting opposite him.

"What on earth are you thinking? I'm a bachelor. If you were to stay here, people will misunderstand," he protested.

"Let them be. Why should I care about what other people think?" she mumbled as she stared at him.

Cut the crap, he's only worried that Joan would misunderstand.

"Or else you can help me look for accommodation," she suggested out of the blue.

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This isn't a bad idea. Hence, Dustin started helping Abelyn to look for a place to stay.

Under Joan's leadership, the business of the photography studio improved tremendously. Its development was on the right track and they started getting more and more customers.

"Ms. Watts, our company is turning a profit."

"That's right! Ms. Watts, let's celebrate tonight."

A few of them started chattering around Joan. The latter agreed that it was about time to treat all the staff.

"Attention please, everybody. Tonight, we shall organize a gathering. It's my treat, so please eat to your hearts' content and have fun!" Joan declared loudly.

Instantly, everyone cheered happily, sending the entire photography studio into a frenzy.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2573

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"Huh? Aren't you going, Ms. Watts?" a staff asked disappointedly.

"I still have some pending work to complete, so I won't be able to join you guys," Joan answered softly.

"All of you must enjoy yourselves to the fullest! This is an order and also a task," she added. Then, she left with a pile of documents.

The same evening, she had to meet an important client who had just returned from abroad. If the collaboration deal was confirmed, it would help bring the photography studio to the next level.

Soon, the sun set. Most staff had already left, except for Joan, who was still typing away on her laptop in the office.

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Right then, her phone rang. As soon as she read the text message, she grabbed her jacket and headed out.

"You're Joan Watts?" Abelyn asked while stirring her cup of coffee.

"Yes, I'm Joan, the owner of the photography studio. Nice to meet you." She extended her right hand.

Unfortunately, Abelyn did not shake her hand.

Embarrassed, Joan withdrew her hand and gave her a wry smile.

"How's the business at your studio?" the woman asked.

"So far so good," Joan replied.

For some reason, Joan felt that the woman had a hidden agenda.

"I'd like to have my photo taken tomorrow," the woman presented her request.

As expected, big clients don't beat around the bush.

However, Joan did not know that the woman's name was Abelyn Chipman; neither was she aware that Abelyn was Dustin's best friend.

"If everything goes well, I'll introduce you to more customers," Abelyn looked her in the eyes and said with a serious face.

"Great! Rest assured that we won't let you down." Joan was resolute.

She had full confidence in the skills of her photographers at the studio.

After a brief chat, Abelyn found Joan to be an easy-going woman whereas Joan felt that Abelyn was a mysterious and unpredictable individual.

Since Dustin couldn't bring himself to deal with Joan, I shall take care of it on his behalf. Abelyn pinched her thigh to remind herself not to fall for that woman's charm.

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At that moment, she was able to identify with Dustin. Perhaps, he likes how composed and calm she is, just like a well-grown lotus.

"It's a date then. I'll go over tomorrow morning..."

With that, they made a deal for their first collaboration.

Thereafter, Joan wanted to join her staff at the gathering. However, she changed her mind after checking the time on her watch.

"I thought you had an outing?" Delilah asked.

"No, I went to meet a client," Joan uttered as she slumped on the sofa.

"Dustin dropped by just now to look for you," Delilah informed her.

"Whatever for?"

"I'm not sure, but it doesn't seem urgent," Delilah answered.

"That's a good one, Ms. Chipman. All right, say cheese... Excellent!"

"Come over and adjust the camera lower."

At the studio, the photographer was busy taking Abelyn's photos.

"Who's that woman? Ms. Watts seems to value her greatly."

"I don't know, but she's a big client, for sure."

The sexy and attractive woman had successfully piqued the interest of a few staff who were gossiping at the studio.

"What are you guys up to? Engaging in tittle-tattles?" Joan approached them and patted their shoulders.

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“Ms. Watts, this document needs your signature,” one of the staff quickly changed the subject.

After a long while, Abelyn commanded the shooting to a halt due to her exhaustion. She then strode into Joan’s office, without considering herself as an outsider.

“How was it? Are you satisfied so far?” Joan stood up and welcomed her.

“It’s not bad,” Abelyn scanned her surroundings and then replied.

Joan’s ordinary office looked just like her staff’s working space; there were no fancy decors. Looks like Joan isn’t as sophisticated as I thought, after all.

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“How do you cope with such a large-scale photography studio single-handedly? Must be tough I presume?” Abelyn was curious.

It’s exceptionally challenging. Joan smiled politely. Admittedly, she wanted to give up at the initial stage when she first took over its operations. In fact, she wanted to sell it off and dismiss the entire team. In the end, she persevered through the challenges because of the faith her staff had in her. How the photography studio could develop according to plans within a short span of time was beyond her expectation.

“Thanks to my team of staff. As long as they’re with me, I have no fear,” Joan replied briefly.

Truth be told that her team was the motivation that fueled her persistence. She was reluctant to give up on a group of passionate and ambitious talents. She could never bear to see their disappointed expressions.

Abelyn was stunned as she glanced over the woman in front of her.

I’ve only heard about how passively submissive Joan was, but I wasn’t aware that she’s actually a career-minded person who values relationships.

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Well, it goes to show that we can't trust all the rumors we hear.

Abelyn strongly believed that Dustin had made a lot of sacrifices for that woman.

"Is there anything wrong, Ms. Chipman?" Joan muttered.

"Oh, nothing, everything's fine." Abelyn quickly collected herself.

She contemplated. On one hand, she felt sorry for Dustin and wanted to acquire the studio for him. On the other hand, she found Joan to be a decent person with a pleasant personality.

At Dustin's house, he questioned Abelyn loudly, "What did you just say? You went to the photography studio? What did you do there?"

"Why are you so worked up? I didn't do anything to Joan," Abelyn replied.

He's so worried because he has a soft spot for Joan.

"Didn't I say it before that I can handle my own matters and I don't need you meddling in my business?" he reiterated his position.

"I didn't meddle in your affairs."

"Then, what are you planning to do exactly?" he interrogated her.

"I want to acquire the photography studio," she said calmly.

Dustin was dumbstruck by her statement.

Abelyn's thought process was very simple. She merely wanted him to focus on his career. Whatever that he could not achieve, she would do it for his sake.

Although Dustin understood Abelyn's perspective, the thought still did not sit well with him.

"Whatever it is, the photography studio belongs to either you or me." Abelyn sipped her tea.

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She's simply unreasonable! Enraged, Dustin left the living room.

People need a push to go the distance, otherwise others will never know how great they can be. Take Dustin for example, he became so reserved and even gave up on multiple opportunities to upgrade himself because of Joan. In the end, he's got nothing.

Abelyn wanted to prove a point to Dustin, that love was not the only thing of great importance in life. There were other things that should take priority such as having a prospective career.

"Ms. Watts, I think we need to be more careful," Faye urged.

"What do you have in mind?" Joan asked.

"This is our first time working with Ms. Chipman. I think that we don't need to rush into a subsequent deal with her. Moreover, we need to get to know her a little bit more..."

Faye said a lot to convince Joan earnestly, but Joan was very reluctant to give up on such a big client.

"She can bring us many businesses," she reminded her assistant.

"Precisely the reason why we should find out more about her, no?"

"Here, I have her information. You can take a look," Joan gave a casual reply.

"Ms. Watts, those are information from the Internet..."

Ding! Ding! Ding!

Suddenly, Joan's phone rang. It was Larry.

"Where are you?" Larry asked.

"At the photography studio."

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Glancing at Joan who was on the phone, Faye sighed while exiting the office. I pray and hope that Abelyn is nothing more than a regular client.

Watching Faye's leaving back, Joan turned her head sideways and continued talking on the phone.

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Abelyn visited the photography studio as scheduled to see her photos.

"Not bad. Your photographers are pretty good," Abelyn complimented while reviewing her photos on the sofa.

Joan chimed in, "Indeed, our photographers are all very professional."

I guess you didn't really take a look at these pictures, did you, Joan? Abelyn scorned in her heart.

Joan was not aware that the photographer who took Abelyn's photos was just an apprentice, who did not possess any exceptional skills nor techniques, but merely knew some photography theories.

Apparently, Abelyn had it all planned, including the outcome of the photos.

"Please help my friend to take good portraits too." Abelyn got up, ready to leave.

Cheers to another successful collaboration! Joan was over the moon.

"All right, we'll keep in touch," she answered excitedly.

"What are these that you've taken? Look, this angle is obviously bad."

Outside the office, the supervisor was going ballistic at a photographer.

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“What’s wrong?” Joan approached them to find out what happened as soon as she sent Abelyn off.

“The supervisor is furious that the photographer messed up the photos,” a young girl updated her.

“Ms. Watts, we can’t show the client this photo. This is definitely not on par with our studio standards.” The supervisor rose to his feet; his attitude was unswerving.

Joan was stunned when she picked up the photos from the table.

Isn’t this Abelyn’s portrait? Gradually, her expression dimmed.

“This picture...?” Joan said hesitantly.

It was one of Abelyn’s photos which was left behind.

“This photo is terrible...”

The supervisor’s remark came as a bolt from the blue and it shocked Joan to the core.

“Ms. Watts, this was requested by Ms. Chipman,” the photographer hurriedly clarified.

Instantly, Joan had a bad hunch.

“Are you sure?” She was dubious.

“Affirmative,” the staff replied confidently.

“Ms. Watts, your phone is ringing!” Faye shouted across the office.

“We’ll come back to this matter.” With that, she dashed into her office.

“Joan, my friends are on their way. I thank you in advance for the hard work,” Abelyn said courteously.

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Before Joan could respond, she hung up. Staring at her phone, Joan started to feel anxious. A sense of trepidation crept up on her.

"Ms. Watts, friends of Ms. Chipman are here!" a staff announced loudly at the office lobby.

"Coming!" Joan replied as she headed out of her office.

Five seemingly polite individuals stood in a straight line and greeted her at the lobby.

"Hello, Ms. Watts!"

"Hi!" Joan welcomed them.

The group then entered her office. They had a brief time getting to know each other. Meanwhile, Faye was observing them suspiciously outside of the office.

"Something tells me that the five of them aren't nice people," a young girl whispered to Faye.

The latter flashed her a thumbs-up without saying anything.

They seemed to be enjoying their conversations. It was Joan's remit to entertain them.

"I'm so sorry that we can't have your photos taken today because our photographers are all busy with off-site duties," Joan made up an excuse and apologized to Abelyn's friends.

"That's all right, we can have him do it for us," a woman said, pointing at the photographer outside.

Joan shuddered subconsciously as she looked in the direction where she had pointed. That's the one who captured Abelyn's pictures!

"That photographer is actually an apprentice at our studio. His skills are comparatively average, so..."

"It doesn't matter, Abelyn said that she trusts that photographer a lot," that woman said openly.

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Seems like I don't have a choice this time.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2576

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After pondering, Joan could only remind the photographer to be extremely careful and thorough.

The matter became rather complicated. If Joan refused their request, she would have indirectly offended Abelyn and gave her clients the impression that the staff at the studio cheated. On the contrary, if she accepted the task, it might also lead to other adverse consequences. After contemplating, Joan decided to go with the latter as it appeared to have a higher possibility for rectification.

"You must be extra careful, got it? Our reputation is at stake." Joan patted the photographer on the shoulder.

"Don't worry, Ms. Watts," he replied.

However, Joan was not at ease for some reason.

The clients interchanged various poses while the photographer carried out his task professionally. Joan remained outside the studio and monitored their every move closely, just in case something untoward would happen.

"Go take a rest, Ms. Watts, I'll keep an eye on them," Faye insisted.

"It's okay." Joan waved her hand to signal that it was not necessary.

After what seemed like forever, the shooting had finally ended and the group left the place.

"How was it? Show me the pictures, quick." Joan hurried over and stared at the screen.

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Phew, thank God there wasn't much issue. This photographer isn't as bad as I think he is, he's just new and inexperienced.

"Hmm... Not bad, at least much better than the last shoot," the supervisor said with a smug.

"Thank you."

The supervisor was the most picky person at the studio. She was a perfectionist who could not tolerate the slightest imperfection. Upon hearing her compliments, Joan heaved a sigh of relief, thinking the work done had passed the required expectation.

"Are they really okay?" Joan wanted to get another confirmation.

"Yup, it's fine. Don't worry, Ms. Watts, he's done well this time," the supervisor assured Joan.

That's great! Joan felt as if a burden off her shoulders.

Everyone thought that there would be no hiccups as long as the photographer had snapped some good pictures. It never crossed their mind that some things could be controlled without their knowledge.

The next day...

"Ms. Watts, hurry up and read the news!"

"Calm down, what is it?" Joan was typing away on her computer.

"Go read the newspaper now!" Faye repeated. The situation was too urgent for her to care about hierarchy and courtesy.

Joan picked up the newspaper on her desk and skimmed through the pages. Suddenly, a catchy headline caught her attention.

Staff at a photography studio collectively defraud clients...

Joan was flabbergasted.

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Since when did we become scammers? Lifting her head, she stared at Faye, completely baffled.

“This was reported by the few clients who came here the other day. Their video clips have also gone viral on the Internet,” informed Faye as she passed her phone to Joan.

“Yes, their photography skills are horrible and how dare they charged us for a remarkably high price!”

“They are a bunch of fraudsters!”

In the video clip, each of Abelyn’s friends was very worked up and they spoke with hatred against all staff at the studio.

“Ms. Watts, I think it’s better you give Ms. Chipman a call,” reminded Faye.

Without further ado, Joan whipped her phone out and made the dreaded call.

“Sorry, the number you’ve dialed is unavailable...”

At that instance, Joan froze on the sofa with a blank face.

“What should we do now, Ms. Watts?”

“I don’t know,” she answered helplessly.

Faye had tried to contact the clients beforehand but none of them picked up any of her calls. In fact, she found out that the addresses written in their records were all fake.

This isn’t a matter about money, but integrity!

If we lose our credibility as a photography studio, it will be a big problem for us to survive in this industry. We’ll only face more difficulties and challenges ahead.

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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2577

Faye could only imagine how dejected Joan felt, at the sight of her sorrowful expression. Without saying a word, she left the office quietly.

“Larry, have you seen the news? Joan’s photography studio is in trouble,” Caspian exclaimed.

“What happened?” Larry asked, with his head bowed.

“It says something about appalling shooting skills and techniques. It also mentions how the photography studio scams its customers...” Caspian recapped the highlights as he read through the news on his phone.

Hearing Caspian describing the awful reviews published, Larry lifted his head, letting out a frosty glare.

He had always thought that the business at the photography studio was bad because they only had a handful of clients. He never expected Joan to be framed for fraudulence.

“When did it happen?” Larry asked.

“It was reported yesterday afternoon,” Caspian answered.

Picking up his phone, Larry darted out of his office.

She must be devastated... Larry rushed into his car and sped off in the direction of Joan’s studio.

“Investigate the case further, especially the few individuals in the video clip,” he commanded coldly over the phone.

“Duly noted!” Caspian obeyed right away.

Both of them tacitly presumed that somebody had orchestrated the whole incident.

Damn it! Who could it be? Larry clenched his fist and hit it hard on the steering wheel.

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“Fraudsters! Close down your business!”

“A scammer boss with no integrity! You should go to hell!”

There was a dreadful commotion outside the photography studio, with a gang of people protesting loudly with written displays.

“What should we do now, Ms. Watts?” Faye had ants in her pants.

Joan was clueless. She had never encountered such a horrifying experience and was not sure how to resolve the mess.

Bang!

The glass at the entrance shattered into a thousand pieces.

Someone cast a stone at the window, causing a chaotic tumult.

“Ouch!”

Suddenly, a staff shouted helplessly from the office lobby, holding his bleeding head.

“What happened?” Joan queried.

“Ms. Watts, there will be more casualties if the situation goes beyond control,” a photographer ran to her and warned.

“Yes, let’s call the police!” Faye suggested.

Joan’s heart sank as she watched the crowd gloat and cheered sarcastically.

“Don’t call the police yet, let me go explain to them personally.” Just as she spoke, she walked out of the office.

“No, Ms. Watts, you can’t go out now, it’s too dangerous!” the photographer trailed behind her and cautioned.

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Indeed, the entrance was congested. Standing in the middle of the office lobby, Joan hesitated. In the end, she made a decision to bite the bullet and face the crowd.

“Please be silent. I’m the person in charge of this photography studio. Things are not as what you’ve perceived,” Joan declared while waving her hands at the crowd, but no one was willing to listen to her.

“Did you hear that? She said she’s the person-in-charge of the photography studio.”

“That’s right! Listen to me, this woman is the boss. She’s the one to blame!”

“Oh, everyone, look! That’s the boss!”

In an instant, a few women took some vegetables and raw eggs from their baskets and threw them at Joan.

“Ah...” Joan tried to stop them desperately but to no avail. She wanted to retreat, only to realize that others had blocked her way from behind.

“B***h! Liar!”

One after another, they threw eggs at her. As a result, Joan landed herself in a disheveled state.

“Stop right there!”

Suddenly, a commanding male voice rang out.

His tone was so domineering and intimidating that everyone stopped their demeaning actions and fixed their eyes on the man who came running toward Joan.

“Are you all right?” Jake asked while giving Joan a comforting hug.

“I’m fine.” She shook her head.

“Hurry up and come inside, Ms. Watts!” Faye assisted her into the lobby.

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"All of you are creating a scene!" Jake grimaced and bellowed.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2578

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"They deceived us first!" a man yelled at the entrance.

"If you said so, where's your evidence? Have you taken your photos at this studio? I dare say that you're not even worthy to have your portraits taken at other low-ranked studios!" Jake mocked them.

He had a point! None of those who were causing a rumpus were actually the customers of Joan's photography studio. Obviously, they were hired by a mastermind to put up a show.

"Mind your own business, you've got nothing to do with this photography studio!" a woman yelled.

"No doubt I'm not the owner, I can't tolerate how you're creating something out of nothing!" Jake folded his arms and stated firmly.

He's as stubborn as a mule! The crowd was getting impatient with Jake. They were displeased to see him trying to defend Joan.

"I suggest you stay out of this, man. Otherwise, you're gonna get it," a man advised Jake.

"It's best you find out who am I first, or risk dying a horrible death," Jake taunted.

The crowd instinctively backed away. A fearful expression settled upon their faces.

"Who's this arrogant man?"

"I don't know either. I don't recognize him and he doesn't look local."

"Is he filthy rich?"

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The people at the back murmured, starting to speculate Jake's identity.

Looking at their terrifying expressions, Jake became even more certain that they were just a group of scaredy-cats who picked and chose who to bully. With that, he straightened his back and tilted his chin up.

"What's your name?" someone in their midst asked.

"I'm Jake Wilson," he answered loud and clear.

Within moments, Jake's name filled the search columns on all of their phones.

"Seriously? He's one of the rich and famous."

"The sole heir of a president of a large domestic company!"

"He studied abroad and established his own foundation."

The girls in the crowd gawked at Jake, adoring him with a twinkle in their eyes.

"Let's go, we can't mess with this guy."

"True. Dealing with a force to be reckoned with is a bad idea, we shouldn't offend him."

Soon, the crowd dispersed.

"Mr. Wilson, can I have your contact number?" a young and beautiful girl came up to Jake and asked bashfully.

"No!" he roared after shooting her a silent glare.

That girl watched him stride into the premises as sorrow fitted across her face.

"It's okay now, don't worry. They have all left," Jake consoled Joan while patting her back.

"Thank you," Joan uttered softly and then let out a cough.

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"Did you catch a cold?" He placed his right palm on her forehead.

"No," Joan answered.

Her eyes turned bleary and she felt super sleepy all of a sudden.

Shortly after, she collapsed to the ground.

"Joan! Wake up!"

"Ms. Watts!"

When she regained her consciousness, she found herself on the hospital bed. Jake was sitting on the sofa, looking tired.

"You're up? Are you thirsty? Hungry?" He was concerned.

Joan did not say a word but merely shook her head.

"Have they all left?" she asked.

"Yes, rest assured that they have all scurried away," Jake replied her gently while brushing her hair on her forehead.

Right then, Larry walked into the ward and caught Jake's action.

"Feeling better?" Larry asked indifferently as he approached the bed.

All of his worries and anxiousness were replaced with hostility the moment he saw that scene. His heart sank and his blood ran cold.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2579

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2579

"Larry, you're here!" Joan said weakly, with a glint of joy in her eyes.

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Immediately, Larry's attention was drawn to the man in front of him. "Why are you here?"

"I passed by the photography studio and saw someone causing trouble, so I went in and checked it out. I didn't expect anything like that." Jake shrugged his shoulders.

Then, Larry approached Joan with an anxious look. "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine!" She flashed him a reassuring smile.

Larry continued to ask her, "Who did that?"

Joan shook her head helplessly.

Looking at the sweet couple before him, Jake felt a prick of sadness and walked out of the ward quietly.

After he left, Larry reconfirmed, "Is it true that Jake happened to pass by?"

"I don't know, but I guess so!" Joan replied calmly.

Still, he suspected something was amiss.

They chatted for a while and changed their topic of conversation.

Larry tucked Joan in and showed concern for her wellbeing. At that moment, she was touched by his warm and caring act.

In fact, Joan was not an ambitious woman, nor was she keen to attain a remarkable achievement. She took over the photography studio in order to avoid the unfair dismissal of the staff for some inexplicable reason.

He then asked, holding her hand tightly, "So... What's your plan? Are you going to carry on or give up?"

"Larry, I don't want to give up!" Joan replied without hesitation.

That's my girl!

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“Great! No matter what your decision is, I’ll support you!” Larry gave her an encouraging smile.

Meanwhile, there were still a few people making trouble at the entrance of the photography studio. They kept clamoring and demanded Joan to deal with them personally.

“Joan Watts! You’d better f*cking come out! This is all your fault!”

“Yeah, you must take full responsibility!”

Several employees paced back and forth anxiously in the studio’s lobby, unsure of what to do.

Suddenly, one of the employees said, “You’re the assistant! You’d better inform Ms. Watts of the situation! Otherwise, what should we do?”

The assistant replied, “Ms. Watts is still in the hospital. We shouldn’t disturb her.”

Immediately, another employee shouted, “Then what are we supposed to do? Are we going to be stuck here forever?”

Facing those irritated and impatient faces, the assistant started panicking.

“Please wait for a while! Perhaps they will leave soon!” Joan’s assistant tried to pacify the staff while pointing at the troublemakers outside of the entrance.

“Damn it!”

“Sigh! I just joined this studio, and such a thing happened!”

Although everyone was complaining, the assistant knew very well that they would not simply quit their job.

Suddenly, a man shouted at the entrance, “Get lost!”

Right away, everyone was stunned.

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It's him again! That man entered the studio and walked toward them slowly. Upon seeing that, the assistant's face broke into a grin unconsciously.

It was Jake. He approached the staff and told them, "All of you can leave now!"

They glanced at the entrance before glancing back at Jake, with curiosity and nosiness gleamed in their eyes.

Then, a timid girl asked softly, "Um... will they jump out at us?"

He turned to look at her and tried to reassure her. "Don't worry! They've left!"

After that, the staff exchanged glances and nodded in agreement. They packed up their stuff and prepared to leave.

Before leaving, one of the employees asked the assistant, "By the way, which hospital was Ms. Watts admitted to? Let's visit her!"

Jake was gratified to hear that. I knew it! They still have Joan on their mind!

"Thank you so much!" The assistant smiled at him.

Jake responded, "It's nothing! Oh, you haven't left?"

"No, I still have work to do!" Joan's assistant replied.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2580

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 2580

Jake asked with a puzzled look, "Aren't you afraid that those people will come and cause trouble again?"

"What's there to be afraid of?" Faye replied calmly, tossing him a bold look.

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In fact, she was trying to conceal her timidity, although she sounded as if she was not afraid of anything. After all, she was a woman.

Nevertheless, Jake was surprised at her statement.

Normally, the staff would have hidden away if they encountered such a situation, but this assistant was very brave about the whole thing.

Still, he said directly, "Let's go! I'll send you home!"

"I'm sorry! I haven't finished my work!" With that, she went upstairs.

Looking at the petite figure, Jake smiled unconsciously. I like her style, man!

Meanwhile, the corridor in the hospital was empty as everyone was resting. There was pin-drop silence in the ward. Joan had already turned off the lights, lying on the bed with her eyes closed. She looked haggard. On the other hand, Larry was busy working overtime in the office.

Squeak! Suddenly, the door of the ward opened.

Immediately, Joan turned around and cracked her eyes, looking at the person approaching her slowly.

Who's that? Could it be Larry? The glaring light blurred her vision, so she blocked it with her hand.

"Joan!" That man called her.

This is not Larry's voice!

He then continued, "Are you alright?"

Finally, Joan saw his face and shouted, "Hey, Dustin! Stop playing around! Are you trying to scare me?"

"Why aren't you afraid?" Dustin asked with a slightly disappointed look.

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She glared at him without saying a word. What's there to be afraid of? This is a hospital and not a slaughterhouse!

He smiled and said, "I just heard that you had an accident, so I rushed over immediately!"

In fact, Dustin went abroad a few days ago, so obviously he did not know Abelyn had carried out her plan.

Joan took a sip of water and responded, "Don't worry! I'm still alive!"

"Did you find out who was behind the whole plot?" Dustin asked tentatively.

He did not want Joan to know the truth, even though he assumed Abelyn was the mastermind. After all, the latter was his close friend and did that for him.

"I have no idea, but I've made a police report. This is more complicated than I thought," Joan replied impassively.

She then looked curiously at him and continued, "Well, let's talk about something else! Where have you been lately? Why do you look so tired?"

"I went abroad to inspect a project."

Dustin continued nonchalantly, "By the way, are you sure you want to continue running the photography studio? Why don't you hand over the studio to me? I'll manage it for you!"

Upon hearing that, Joan pondered his suggestion. Actually, it's not a bad idea to hand over the studio to him. After all, he is more experienced than me, but he may dismiss the current staff after taking over the studio.

"If you don't dismiss..."

"That's impossible!" Dustin interrupted her before she could finish her words.

He then added, "I need an elite team instead of an unorganized and undisciplined group of people!"

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Unfortunately, Joan did not see eye to eye with him on that issue, and their discussion ended in a quarrel. That was the first time they quarreled, and it was also the first time she was utterly disappointed in him.

“Joan, you know you can’t manage the studio well and there is a problem with the staff! Why do you insist on retaining them?” Finally, Dustin could not help but shout at her.

“Firstly, I don’t have experience in management, but I can learn. Secondly, I admit that some of the staff are not up to par yet, but they have been working hard and making contributions to the company. I believe they will succeed one day!” Joan said stubbornly.

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