

Waylon felt a sense of injustice as Emmeline seemed to have misinterpreted his intentions without giving him a chance to explain. Did Doris say something negative about him behind his back? Did she intentionally create this misunderstanding between them?

For the first time, Waylon couldn't contain his frustration and immediately dialed Doris' number. Doris was in a taxi when she saw Waylon's call and hurriedly answered it.

"Are you moving out?" Waylon asked abruptly, his words coming out before he could properly frame his question. He had intended to ask if Doris had reported him to Emmeline.

Doris hesitated for a moment, taken aback by

Waylon's question. Moving out was her decision, and it had nothing to do with him. Why was he concerned about it?

"It's not that," Waylon quickly clarified, realizing his mistake. "That's not what I meant."

"Mr. Adelman," Doris responded, "you don't need to persuade me. I've already made up my mind."

"I wasn't trying to persuade you," Waylon said, his tone growing colder. "But did I give you a hard time? What's the point of all this?"

"I thought the kids' arguments might be affecting you," Doris stammered, trying to explain herself. "I felt uneasy living under the same roof."

"Did I ever complain about the kids bothering me?" Waylon retorted. "Did their noise bother me?"

"One must bow under the eaves," Doris struggled to find her words. "I've been anxious every day, to be honest."

"Am I that bad? Am I so awful that you feel anxious just being around me?"

"Well..." Doris hesitated.

"Never mind, don't misunderstand," Waylon abruptly changed his tone, his voice turning icy. "Do as you please."

"Mr. Adelmarr, please don't be angry, I..." Doris attempted to speak, but Waylon had already hung up.

What was that about? Waylon didn't want her to stay, did he? Wasn't he filled with nothing but contempt for her? He had said not to misunderstand, but then why

did he make this call?

Doris pondered Waylon's intentions, still in the taxi as it arrived at Canaryville. She paid the fare and carried her small bag toward the former rental house.

"Ding dong," she pressed the doorbell.

A man in his forties, the landlord, opened the door with a welcoming smile.

"Doris, I've been waiting for you," the landlord greeted her warmly.

"Sorry," Doris said, "there was some traffic on the way."

"No problem, no problem," the landlord stepped aside, inviting her inside. "Please, have a seat."

Doris followed him inside, going through each room.

"The walls have been freshly painted with latex. The previous smoke stains have all been covered," the landlord said. "And I've replaced all the furniture. It's a whole new look."

"I'm sorry for causing you so much trouble," Doris apologized, "who would have thought things would turn out like this?"

"As long as nobody got hurt," the landlord said, "that's already fortunate in such unfortunate circumstances."

"Could you let me know the total cost of the damages?" Doris asked, "I'll compensate you accordingly."

"I have an itemized list here," the landlord said, picking up a printed document from the coffee table.

Doris took it and glanced down, seeing the final sum of seventy-six thousand six.

"It's over seventy thousand, right?" Doris said, "Give me your account details, and I'll transfer the money to you. I can't transfer such a large sum through Whatsapp."

"No rush," the landlord reassured her. "If it can't be transferred in a day, take two or three. I'm not in urgent need of the money."

"That's good then," Doris said, "I'll consider moving back here so you don't have to refund the remaining rent."

"It would be best if you moved back," the landlord said, "but the rent cannot remain the same."

Doris was surprised. "You're not going to raise the rent, are you?"

"The rental prices in this neighborhood have increased, and I haven't made any changes," the landlord explained. "You know that as well, Doris."

"But," Doris looked concerned, "you also know about my situation. I'm a divorced woman with two children under one-year-old. It's already difficult for me to make ends meet. I rented this place originally because your rent was reasonable. Can you please hold off on increasing it?"

"Well..." the landlord narrowed his eyes and said, "Not increasing the rent is also possible."

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