

Remarry 311

[Chapter 311 The Best Choice](#)

The spell lasted for only a few moments before Patricia's skin prickled with the sensation of a heavy gaze. She turned her head around, looking for its origin.

It was an unsettling feeling. Even more so when she couldn't find where it had come from.

Jack picked up on the sudden shift in her mood, and his brows furrowed at the thought of something interrupting her pleasant mood. "What's wrong?" he asked worriedly, his eyes following the direction of her gaze.

Patricia found nothing amiss, but she couldn't shake off the feeling of being watched.

She shook her head, deciding not to linger on the uncomfortable feeling. She turned back to Jack, smiling as she urged him to resume their meal.

With her not saying anything more about it, it slipped away from Jack's mind soon enough, his thoughts filled with the time he was sharing with her.

He was about to put a piece of carrot cake in his mouth when his phone rang. Frowning, he took it out and looked at the screen, his face turning into a grimace when he read the caller ID.

Patricia saw the change in his expression from the corner of her eyes, her face falling at the realization. Even without saying anything, she could already roughly guess who the caller was.

"Mom..." The helpless expression on his face confirmed everything she needed to know.

The next moment, Patricia raised her eyes and looked straight at Jack. She opened her mouth to speak but was interrupted by Jack's frustrated answer.

"I see." The call ended. Jack immediately looked at Patricia with a lost expression, as he struggled to speak.

Patricia's eyes softened as she watched him desperately try to come up with an explanation. "Don't worry about it," she said, giving him her best reassuring smile even as her insides twisted in conflict.

Patricia knew how Joanne thought of her. She would never approve of her and Jack being together.

The thought dampened her spirit. The corners of her mouth tugged downward into unhappy lines as a chasm opened in her chest— the cold feeling steadily wearing down on her and taking away the day's earlier warmth.

Watching Patricia's smile dissolve into sadness felt like a punishment. Jack had been caught off-guard by

the call, and he didn't know what to say to fix things. Leaning towards Patricia, he pressed his lips softly to her forehead and said gently, "Patricia, I'm so sorry. Wait for me. I'll be right back."

With that, he hastily stood up and left, his face drawn in anxiousness.

As soon as Jack left, Patricia let her honest feelings show on her face, turning her expression cold.

Perhaps it was also her fault for not thinking things through enough. Joanne had not crossed her mind at all. She knew about Jack's feelings, and could feel herself slowly learning to open her heart to him. Blindly following her impulse, she had agreed to be his girlfriend.

But reality was never that simple. Joanne was Jack's mother, and she would always be in his life. The thought of this sent a throb to Patricia's head, and she felt her temples pulse with the telltale beginnings of a headache.

It was as if she shared her mother's fate. The Lowell family refused to accept her and Richard, and so the two had to brave a thorny path before finally ending up together.

Would things turn out the same way for her? She found no answer even as these thoughts claimed her mind.

The next moment, a cold voice came out of nowhere and yanked her from her engrossment.

"You still don't understand?" Zac was standing not far away from her, his tall figure set in a cocksure stance as he gazed at her with an incomprehensible expression.

Patricia looked at him with indifferent eyes, but could not say a word. Of course, she understood.

Joanne would be an enduring obstacle between her and Jack.

"And what of it?" she finally answered— her voice as cold as her eyes. She did not have the slightest desire to get entangled with Zac.

His appearance here had given her answers about where the disquieting feeling from earlier came from. It seemed that Zac had been secretly watching her and Jack since the beginning.

Zac was a little taken aback at her words. He opened his mouth to speak but closed it again the next moment, not knowing what to say. His lips fell into a thin, harsh line as his eyes darkened.

"I just want to remind you not to make rash decisions. Joanne is not an easy opponent," Zac said with a calmness that was a stark contrast to the inner turmoil he felt. Deep in his heart, he hoped that Patricia would reconsider. Perhaps then, she would see that Jack was not the best choice.

But Patricia's own opinion was irreconcilable to that. To her, Jack was a far better man— anyone else

would seem lackluster in comparison, especially Zac.

"I never asked for your opinion. I have nothing to do with you, nor do I have anything to say to you."

Her cold expression never left her face. She had tired herself from repeating the same thing again and again, but Zac stayed like a stain she couldn't remove.

But then again, that was just the kind of man he was— no one else could make him give up other than himself.

"I..." Zac started, opening his lips slightly. But whatever he was about to say next was caught in his throat, refusing to budge.

He looked at her quietly and stood still, as if in a haze.

The way he looked at her made something in Patricia's chest ache. "That's enough, Zac," she said, her voice faint and almost fragile. "Everything has changed now, and we can't go back anymore."

Her own words felt like needles piercing her heart, reopening wounds that reminded her of feelings she hadn't forgot yet.

A rueful smile appeared on Zac's lips. His eyes remained fixed on her, speaking to her of the things he could never say out loud.

"I understand," he said. "I just wanted to remind you not to rush into things. I know how headstrong you can be, but don't be reckless."

With that, he turned around and strode away, leaving Patricia alone in the tangle of her emotions.

She couldn't stop the deep sigh that escaped from her. The day that had started out so beautifully had turned gray in an instant. Her shoulders slumped as she sat at the table. Even the dishes that she loved the most tasted bitter now.

Jack arrived home and found his mother sitting on the sofa, her face burning in fury.

"Mom, you..." He was about to say something, but the look on Joanne's face made him stop cold.

"What is the meaning of this? Are you really trying to get on my nerves?" Joanne shot up, looking at Jack with her face flushed in anger.

Jack lowered his head, looking away from his mother with guilt. Since the day he had been discharged from the hospital, Joanne had kept a close watch on him, deliberately sending him away under the pretext of letting him handle business. But he had stubbornly chosen to come back for Patricia.

This knowledge had pushed Joanne's anger to the brink that she passed out. She had to be taken to the hospital and stayed there for a couple of days. Today was the day she had been discharged, and she came home to the news that her son was once again with that woman. She fainted from fury a second time, and now she was awake, feeling the full extent of it burn through her skin.

"Mom, no, you're being unfair to her. And even if you act like this, I won't give her up," Jack answered, raising his head and looking at Joanne with eyes full of resolve. He would not be backing down now.

He knew that his mother didn't like Patricia. Joanne had not meant what she said last time when she told him she would let him decide on his own.

And now, the reality of seeing Jack grow closer to that woman made her unable to hold back.

"What did you just say?"

She gasped angrily. In a fit of impassioned anger, her hand closed around the ashtray on the table and threw it fiercely at Jack.

[Chapter 312 I'm Sorry](#)

Jack helplessly pursed his lips as he stared at Joanne's miserable expression. He held back what he had to say to her.

She was infuriated at the resentment manifested in his eyes. Glowering, she furiously said, "You are so head over heels for that bitch. Do you really think Patricia would spare you another glance if you weren't an heir of this family?"

Although Jack did not object, he bitterly scowled at what Joanne had said.

He was aware of the kind of person Patricia was.

"You ought to end things with her now. There are many affluent and charming women that you can date. Surely you would fall in love with any one of them," Joanne said firmly without any room for discussion.

She was adamant about separating Jack from Patricia.

If truth be told, Joanne didn't think that Patricia was up to the mark for him.

Disgruntled, Jack grimaced as he said in a low voice, "Regardless of what you say, Mom, I love her, and I can't let go of her." Jack's determination didn't let Joanne sway his decision at all.

He was aware that his words would aggravate his mother but in his heart, he had chosen Patricia.

"You..... You... " Unable to form a sentence, Joanne breathed heavily as she pointed towards Jack.

But in less than a moment, Joanne passed out and fell on the sofa.

Jack screamed as he rushed to his mother's side and gently shook Joanne's body and whispered, "Mom, wake up." He felt dejected as he blamed himself for his mother's state. In a matter of seconds, Jack was in a dilemma.

He didn't show up at the teahouse to meet Patricia. She thought that he would be with his mother so she didn't ring him. After waiting for quite some time, she decided to leave and wandered the streets aimlessly.

As she strolled, she couldn't help but recall memories whenever she would see intimate couples, which brought a faint smile to her lips.

She used to envy such couples before but now she wondered, 'What would happen if Zac and I were together like this?'

She fantasized about the happiness she'd feel if they were closer to each other.

She walked around in a daze with an empty heart. There was a faint smile on her face, but it was worse than crying.

Patricia didn't know how long she had wandered on the street. Feeling tired, she sat on the stone bench and glanced coldly at the passers-by.

An enthusiastic voice woke her from her trance as she looked in the direction of it. She saw Dora beaming at her.

"Patricia, why are you here alone?" Dora suspiciously inquired as she walked over to her. She couldn't help but frown at the sullen look at Patricia's face.

Without waiting for her reply, Dora immediately asked, "Did you fight with your boyfriend?" Dora looked at her curiously, Patricia didn't understand why she gave her that look.

Seeing the expression on Dora's face, Patricia raised her eyebrows. Her beautiful eyes looked puzzled. She shook her head and said, "Actually, it's not like that."

She couldn't understand herself as both Jack's and Zac's faces came to her mind.

"What's wrong?" Dora asked tentatively. A trace of confusion flashed across her face. She could sense that something had troubled Patricia.

With a faint smile on her face, Patricia shook her head and said gently, "Nothing. Dora, why are you here?"

Patricia asked, diverting the topic as she didn't want to recall today's incident nor did she want to think about either Jack or Zac.

Dora caught on to what Patricia was trying to do so she steered the conversation and softly said, "The sunlight here is so intense, let's go and find somewhere else to sit."

As she finished speaking, Dora's eyes landed on a cafe nearby but as Patricia was about to speak, her phone rang. She picked up the call.

"Jack..." It was the first time that Patricia felt so eager to receive a call from Jack.

After a long pause, he said, "I'm sorry, Patricia. I can't be with you today. I..."

As he was about to say something, a scream in the background halted his words and he immediately hung up.

Baffled, Patricia kept her phone down, she didn't know what to say. She felt as if she was at the lowest of low.

The scream on the phone just now was very clear to her. It was Joanne's voice.

Misery overcame her cold face. However, as soon as she realized that Dora was with her, she masked it with a smile.

"Dora, I have something to deal with." As soon as Patricia finished speaking, she smiled, stood up and left quickly.

Dora felt deeply concerned for her, so she decided to make a call. Although she couldn't help, Patricia still needed to be taken care of right now.

Once again, as she aimlessly walked, Patricia stumbled upon the Sampson Bay.

It seemed to be the only place where she didn't need to hide her true self and could face life directly.

A gust of sea wind blew towards her, with the smell of salty seawater in the air, but Patricia was very relaxed as she felt engulfed in nostalgia.

"Grandpa, the water is salty and awful. Why do you like it? "

"Because it feels beautiful to look at the sea."

As the memories of the conversation between her and her grandfather rushed to her mind, Patricia felt at ease with a soft smile playing on her lips. She closed her eyes, immersing herself in the good old days

of her tranquil childhood when she used to live in the Sampson Bay with her grandpa.

Unfortunately, it was all in the past now, and there was no way to go back.

Patricia gently opened her eyes, taking in the scene in front of her. As the construction had begun, the familiar things around the bay had started to gradually fade away.

Patricia scoffed as she realized that the Sampson Bay no longer belonged to her but was now part of the Reynolds Group.

Thinking of all this, she felt a twinge in her heart. She held her hand against her chest as she felt pure agony and sorrow.

"Zac, what did I do wrong? Why did you take the Sampson Bay from me?" Gritting her teeth, she asked these questions in a low voice as tears streamed down her face.

At that moment, she had let loose all the grief and misery that she had bottled up for so long.

She didn't hate Zac, but why couldn't he leave the very last beautiful thing to her.

"I'm sorry!" Suddenly, a cold voice filled with immense remorse and sorrow came from behind.

[Chapter 313 Leave With Me](#)

At these words, Patricia turned back to Zac with cold, distant eyes— her lips pressed tightly into a thin line of anger.

A thousand apologies could not undo what had already been done. Why was he stopping her now? Was this him asking for another shot?

"Patricia, I'm sorry. I know that the things I had done broke your heart." Zac spoke slowly, almost as if breathing the words out. His eyes were fixed on her— his feelings remaining obscure behind the inscrutable expression he wore.

With a rueful smile, Patricia stood still without saying a word. She raised her head to look at the sky, then closed her eyes, letting go of a breath. She was tired. Zac's presence weighed down on her like gray clouds preceding rain. There was nothing left to say.

Just like it had always been.

Past lovers that crossed paths again could exchange lukewarm, half-hearted greetings, but words failed the two of them—dying long before reaching each other.

"Patricia, you have to think about this. You saw what happened just now. Jack isn't—"

"Enough, Zac. I won't let you speak badly of him." Patricia stopped Zac before he could finish, not wanting to listen to the rest of his words. She looked at him with reproach, her lips set in a tense line.

Zac was stunned at her aggressive defense of the other man. He smiled in resignation and nodded.

He had never expected Patricia to protect Jack. The thought of another man's name on her lips made Zac's chest tighten painfully.

Was he too late? Had she already fallen in love with Jack?

He felt his heart lurch— the sorrow was visceral, his throat tightening as breathing had suddenly become a burden. But even as it pained him, he kept looking at Patricia, his lips opening and closing as he desperately searched for words.

The sight of Zac at a loss brought a cold smile to Patricia's lips. "Zac, which part of it is hard to understand? Me defending Jack, or him being my boyfriend?"

Her words were bullet wounds to his battered heart. Zac had to stop himself from gasping at his invisible wounds.

"I know. I know he's your boyfriend. Even I understand that," he murmured in a low voice, as if he was speaking to himself instead of her.

Then, his gaze turned away, finding the bay not far from them and letting the still waters fill his vision. After a brief moment, the corners of his mouth tilted upward in a defeated smile. Zac turned around without another word, leaving Patricia to watch his figure recede until it was swallowed by the distance.

When he was gone, she fell into a hunched position— her knees bending of their own accord. All her strength had fled her, and her mind was a mess after what had just happened.

With Jack... With Zac's words... Everything was suffocating her from all directions, and she didn't know where to run.

Patricia buried her head in her knees, confusion clouding her thoughts.

What now?

She had lost all sense of time as she remained in the same position, folded over herself as her thoughts raged in a whirlwind. A gentle voice came to her and pulled her to her senses. Patricia looked up to where it had come from.

Kareem stood in front of her, his back turned against the light. Shadows fell on his face, covering some of his features, but the sadness in his eyes reached her.

"Kareem..." Patricia called in a low voice. She tried to stand up, but her feet were numb from being in the same position for too long. Moving on shaky limbs, she lost her balance and stumbled.

Kareem had quickly moved to catch her, and he regarded Patricia with sympathetic eyes. Before he could stop himself, he muttered, "Patricia, why are you doing this to yourself?" The next moment, Patricia felt his arms surrounding her in an embrace. Kareem held her tightly, as if he never wanted to let go.

His sudden unexpected action caught Patricia off-guard, and she instinctively broke away from his hold. She gave Kareem an awkward smile. "Thank you, Kareem. I hadn't noticed that my feet had gone numb, so I fell."

She did not meet his eyes as she spoke. Patricia knew Kareem's own persistence. He never gave up on her.

The thought sent a small shudder through her. Among the three men, it was Kareem who was the most aggressive, and she could never guess what he would do next.

"Patricia..." Kareem said slowly, his warm eyes looking at her with a light she didn't recognize.

Without waiting for a response, Kareem pushed forward. "Are you really that stupid? Why would you let yourself be in this position?"

Patricia looked at Kareem in incomprehension. She didn't understand what he meant. But before she could make sense of his words, his hand shot out and closed around her wrist, his face wearing an expression of strange calmness.

"Kareem..." She called out in surprise. Alarms were ringing in her head as her heart pounded uneasily. His touch on her made her skin crawl.

"Patricia, I could take you away from all of this. It's difficult, isn't it? Being in the middle of all this chaos. I'll take you with me—somewhere Zac or Jack wouldn't reach you. I'll take good care of you, and you won't have to worry about anything again." Then, Kareem was pulling her to his car. He threw her in the passenger seat and got in, locking the doors and speeding away.

Patricia recognized the way to the airport. She looked at him with wide eyes and asked, "Where are you taking me?"

She should have known Kareem was planning something when he appeared at the bay. His eyes had a strange gleam in them, and he didn't seem to be in the right frame of mind.

"We'll be leaving this place and go to a place where no one knows us. We can live together, you and I. I'll make you happy." The sight of Kareem's smile made Patricia's stomach turn. He was looking at her with a delirious expression, as if he was finding immense pleasure in the picture he had formed in his

imagination.

But Patricia felt the exact opposite.

Kareem was determined. She knew that he had come to her with his mind made up.

"Kareem, listen to me," Patricia said, wanting to try to talk sense into him. The car continued forward, and she didn't have much time.

But the man was not interested in listening. He stepped on the gas, and the engine gave a loud hum as the car sped forward. The sudden acceleration pushed Patricia back to her seat, and she gripped the door handle for dear life.

A few moments later and the car came to a halt at the airport. Patricia was yet to catch her breath from the rapid driving, but Kareem was already pulling her out of the car and walking inside.

She frowned at him, unable to believe his recklessness. Yanking her hand free of his hold, she spoke to him word by word, "That's enough, Kareem. Stop this. It's not going to happen."

Yes, her life was hell. But she couldn't leave. There were people she loved here, and she wouldn't be disappearing from them without a word.

Kareem looked at her quietly, as if in understanding, then quickly answered, "Don't worry about your mother. If you want to see her, I could take you back anytime. I can even have someone report to you about her every day if that makes you feel more secure."

He smiled at her indulgently, as if he was smiling at a child.

Patricia felt her shoulders sag in defeat. She shook her head at him. If Kareem did not understand, she would have to spell it out for him.

She would never leave with him.

"Kareem, please. We will never be together."

[Chapter 314 Giving Up](#)

Patricia had said these same words to Kareem many times in the past, over and over again, but he never once listened.

"Kareem. I appreciate your love for me, but we're not meant for each other. We can't be together," Patricia said in a cold voice as she looked straight into Kareem's eyes.

She had already made up her mind this time. She didn't want it to go on like this anymore.

"Patricia, why can't you just give me a chance?" Kareem pressed. "I really love you. I want to be with you."

Kareem held Patricia in his arms and gave her a sad look as though imploring her to say yes.

At that moment, Patricia felt the longing and love from Kareem's voice, his words and his touch, just like the way she felt for Zac in the past. She'd been through this before, and she didn't want Kareem to go through the same thing she did.

Patricia shook her head and smiled ruefully. "That's enough, Kareem. Stop doing this. Just give up. We will never be together."

Every word she spoke was like a weight on Kareem's heart, one by one.

Stunned, Kareem stared at her, the panic growing in his eyes by the second. "No, no... I can't give up. I can't," he muttered in alarm. "You're mine, Patricia. You're mine, and no one can take you away from me."

Kareem's eyes changed all of a sudden, as though he were suddenly triggered by something. He began tightening his arms around her in a fierce grip with a strange expression flashing across his face. He dragged her towards the ticket hall without a word.

Even after Patricia told him off as frankly as she could, Kareem didn't care and didn't listen to her at all.

Patricia pursed her lips and was about to say something when she suddenly heard a familiar and gentle voice.

'...Jack?'

Patricia turned around and saw Jack standing at the door, glaring at Kareem venomously and looking out of breath. He stalked over towards them and held her in his arms as if protecting her from Kareem.

"Would you care to tell me the reason why you're taking my girlfriend away, Mr. Reynolds?" Jack demanded, staring at Kareem with his features contorted in anger.

He then pulled Patricia to his side, looking at her worriedly. "Hey, are you okay?" he asked softly. "Are you hurt anywhere?"

Patricia shook her head slightly. Being here beside Jack, encased in his warm hold and his familiar smell, she felt safe and relieved. She felt that, as long as Jack was here, everything would be all right.

Meanwhile, Kareem was standing there, staring at how intimate Patricia and Jack were being right in front of his eyes. His features began forming into a scowl. "Mind your own business, Jack," he said hotly.

"Sorry to disappoint you, but it is my business," Jack said firmly. "Because Patricia is my girlfriend." Since they were officially together, Jack knew that he had the upper hand in this kind of situation right now.

Shock displayed itself on Kareem's expression. He whipped his head towards Patricia, his gaze filled with suspicion and disbelief. His eyes seemed like they were trying to probe the truth from Patricia.

Patricia took a deep breath and held Jack's hand in her own. "Kareem, I'm with Jack now. You should give up. Please."

Kareem was quiet for a moment, then took a step back with a bitter smile on his face. He had already heard about it a long time ago, but when he heard those words from Patricia herself, it finally sunk in.

"All right, I... I see..." Kareem's eyes grew redder by the second as he spoke, staring at Jack with a restrained expression on his face. He unconsciously clenched his fists at his sides, as if he wanted to beat Jack up right at that moment.

Seeing this, Patricia immediately stood in front of Jack and shook her head, sending a warning look towards Kareem and hinting at him not to act recklessly.

Actually, Patricia didn't mean to protect Jack, but with how the situation was currently going, she didn't want the two of them to possibly get into a fight, especially in a public place like this.

There was a beat of silence for a moment before Kareem finally lowered his head in defeat. When he looked back, his gaze swept across their faces, landing on Jack's with clear dissatisfaction before he rested his sad eyes on Patricia. After that, he left dejectedly.

Patricia sighed as she stared at Kareem's retreating back. Even though what she did might have been a bit cruel, it was the best thing she could do in order for Kareem to finally give up on her.

At that moment, arms wrapped around her from behind. Jack rested his chin on her shoulder, his face breaking into a happy grin. "You stood up for me..." he said softly.

After seeing what she had done just now, Jack really felt that Patricia loved him and cared about him.

Patricia lowered her head with a bitter smile. She knew that Jack totally misunderstood her actions, but she didn't feel like explaining anything to him right now.

Patricia knew what he might be thinking, but decided to keep silent.

In a few moments, she regained her usual coldness and only gave a faint smile as a response. "How's your mom?"

Actually, Patricia didn't want to talk about Joanne, but she couldn't find any other topic to talk about.

At that moment, a strange, indecipherable expression flashed across Jack's face. It was as though he were hiding something. But then a smile began curving his lips.

"She's just angry at me. It happens all the time." Although it was easy for Jack to say that, she knew that it wasn't exactly the case, especially when she saw how he tried to hide his true emotions just now.

Patricia nodded slightly in response. She kept silent and didn't expose Jack's lie, but there was sadness hiding behind her eyes.

Meanwhile, Zac locked himself in his room and refused to come out. Nicholas stood at the door, a worried expression on his face. "Boss... Boss...?" he kept calling out, hoping he could get a response.

However, Zac didn't answer Nicholas even once. The only thing that replied back was the sound of bottles falling to the ground. Nicholas frowned at this and bowed his head, a trace of sadness showing on his face.

Zac remained in his room for the entire afternoon and never once came out.

"Boss, come on, say something! You're making me worried!" Nicholas shouted as he slammed his fist against the door. If Zac didn't answer him this time, he was going to break in.

There was a quick silence on the other end before the door was finally opened, revealing Zac standing there with the life gone from his eyes.

Seeing the look in Zac's eyes, Nicholas couldn't help but swallow inaudibly. Zac didn't look like himself. Rather, it was like he changed into a different person now.

"Boss... you finally opened the door. Don't do anything stupid. Let's talk about it," Nicholas tried to comfort him.

Honestly, it was the first time that Nicholas saw Zac looking so out of sorts. He was stunned for a while and didn't know what to say.

"I'm fine," Zac told him coldly. Then, in a low voice, he asked, "How's the investigation going?"

"Joanne doesn't like Patricia. She was so angry with Jack that she eventually became ill. It's kind of serious," Nicholas said casually. However, when he saw the expression on Zac's face, his demeanor turned serious all of a sudden. "Patricia might also be having a hard time right now," he said respectfully.

At his words, Zac lowered his head to look at the floor as though he was thinking of something.

Looking at Zac's expression, Nicholas frowned. He opened his mouth to speak, but paused for a while

when he suddenly remembered something. "By the way, Kareem almost took her away today. Fortunately, Jack appeared just in time—"

Before Nicholas could even finish speaking, Zac had already rushed out the door.

[Chapter 315 Nuisance](#)

A frown creased Nicholas' forehead as he watched Zac's figure disappear. "What's going on? What is he so nervous about?"

He stood in front of the room, muttering to himself in confusion.

Zac's Porsche sped through the streets, mirroring his haste to get to Patricia. Once he got to her apartment, he was greeted with the sight of her and Jack downstairs. Instinctively, he stepped back and concealed himself.

"I'm so sorry, Patricia," Jack apologized, his eyes sorrowful with guilt. Had he not left Patricia alone, Kareem wouldn't have had his chance to take her away. He didn't even want to think of what could have happened if he hadn't met them halfway.

"Don't worry about it. We always have next time," Patricia answered with a half-smile, averting her eyes from his.

She was being kind—her words spoken to placate him, but Patricia's gentleness only magnified the weight of his failure. The traces of his self-loathing surfaced for a moment before being hidden once again in the obsidian depths of his eyes.

But his shame did not escape Patricia. She knew that Jack was blaming himself for what had happened, rousing her own helplessness in turn. She struggled to find words to comfort him, but only managed a clumsy goodbye after a few moments of strained conversation.

She hesitated on the last step into the building, wanting to dispel the awkwardness between them. Patricia whirled around, only to find Jack already some distance away, walking with hurried strides as he gripped his phone in one hand.

'Ah, ' Patricia thought to herself, already knowing what had happened. Joan must have hurried him back.

A resigned smile curved on her lips. Her heart felt heavy in her chest, as if being pulled down by an invisible weight. Exhaustion crept into her bones. It had only been the first day, but Patricia already felt burdened. How much more turbulent would it be in the future?

As her uncertainties took hold, a sigh escaped her. She was too tired. She didn't want to think anymore.

Turning her gaze upward, she took a deep breath. Finding no comfort in the vastness of the sky, she turned around and walked into the building.

Just as she was about to go upstairs, strong arms suddenly caught her captive, dragging her into the dark. Before she could let out a scream, Patricia found herself being pressed on the wall.

A warm breath grazed her lips before taking them captive in a rough, untamed kiss. Patricia wanted to break free, but the instinct to resist quickly melted away, smothered by the vague calmness of a familiar sensation on her skin.

The kiss lingered for a long time— the minutes passing by unknowingly between the two. Finally, Zac raised his head, breathing deeply as he spoke in a low voice, "You..."

His hoarse voice camouflaged his emotions well. It was difficult to tell whether the gravelly tone was from anger or pleasure. Patricia just stood there in a daze, neither struggling nor succumbing. It was as if she had become part of the concrete— cold and unmoving.

"What? Are you done?" She sneered, her sweet lips spewing out the words so callously. Her eyes were empty as she looked at Zac.

Patricia couldn't tell the exact moment that she recognized him. Perhaps it was the familiar scent of his perfume mingling with tobacco.

As if his traces were imprinted on her, she knew it was Zac.

The man bit his lower lip harshly. Zac looked straight at Patricia. Even in the dark, he could see her face clearly. He reached out to her, caressing the elegant curves of her face.

"It's not like that," he reasoned. "I just hope..." Once again, his words died before reaching her. Zac could only look at Patricia, his eyes awash with despair and anguish.

Patricia looked at him with indifferent eyes, not understanding what he meant. His eyes were still as beautiful as she remembered— deep orbs as cold and dark as the night.

"What do you want?" Patricia said coldly.

"Nothing," Zac answered, mirroring her impassivity. His hand had stopped its movement, his fingers stiffening.

Patricia's smile was aloof as she pushed him away with both hands.

"If there's nothing, then don't appear in front of me again. You're being a nuisance." She lingered over every word, speaking them slowly.

Her voice had been light, but Zac felt every word like a laceration, slicing him open to bleed.

Before he could say anything, Patricia turned around and strode upstairs, leaving him no chance to talk.

He could only watch as she turned away from him again. All at once, he found himself sinking into a loss. He didn't even understand why he had come here. All reason fled him when he heard that Kareem wanted to take Patricia away.

The next thing he knew, he was bolting to his car with nothing else on his mind but to see her again. Only the sight of her could relieve the burn in his chest.

But now that he had seen her, he was seized with the desire to talk to her, to beg her to think things over again and hear him out.

None of that happened. The fire was gone, but there was only a charred, gaping hole in his insides.

Zac stood alone in the dark, his deep gaze mingling with the night.

Meanwhile, the news of Patricia and Jack being together had reached Lyndsy. In her anger, she threw her phone to the ground, gritting her teeth at the feeling of being wronged.

"What the hell! What is so good about that bitch? Why are so many people running after her?" She bit her lip as she fumed.

Even if Patricia already had Jack, Zac and Kareem still hadn't given up on her. Just what was it about her that made these men obsessed?

What had gotten into Lyndsy's nerves even more was that her plans were all ruined. All the blame went to her and Yolanda. Now neither of them could even go out without the fear of being harassed.

And as if that had not been punishment enough, all the young men that had used to trail after her like loyal dogs were now ignoring her, or worse, sending looks her way like she was inferior.

"Patricia, you bitch! This is all your fault!" Her fingers dug into the cushion on the couch, tearing the fabric into shreds.

Yolanda could only look on with pity and distress as Lyndsy took her anger out on the poor sofa.

She was filled with worry. Yolanda knew what was going on in her daughter's head, and her health had not been in the best condition these days. No mother could be at ease seeing their child locked in a room while outsiders plagued her with their incessant stares and mocking whispers.

"Lyndsy, you have to eat this quickly. It will help you recover." With an affectionate tone, she walked up to Lyndsy, holding a bowl of bird's nest soup in her hands.

But Lyndsy only turned away, as if she despised the sight of her own mother. In her heart, she was still

partly blaming Yolanda.

If it weren't for her, things wouldn't have turned out like this. Lyndsy had been dragged into all this trouble because of her.

The thought of her being trapped inside her own house while Patricia was being chased around by all those men made her blood boil.

"Darling, you need to eat." Yolanda tried again, persuading her daughter.

Lyndsy couldn't bear seeing the pity in her own mother's eyes. She hissed, "I don't have any appetite. Seeing that bitch so happy makes my stomach turn."

Yolanda understood perfectly what she meant. Her daughter wouldn't just sit still and do nothing while Patricia lived her happy life. She would be taught her lesson soon.

"I know, but you have to recover first. After you eat and regain some energy, we can talk about how to deal with her." Yolanda's face turned murderous as she spoke. Her eyes glinted with malice and cruelty, as if she was already imagining Patricia's ruin.

[Chapter 316 Kareem's Invitation](#)

Hearing this, Lyndsy turned to Yolanda, looking at her expectantly. This was the answer she had been waiting for. Yolanda's expressions assured her that her mother would not let her down.

Even though Yolanda was on a rocky road, Lyndsy had faith in her that she would have a way to subdue Patricia.

"Mom, are you serious?" She stood up and curiously walked up to her.

Pure malice was evident in Yolanda's eyes as she nodded and whispered in a firm tone, "But I need you to do it this time."

"Me?" Confused, Lyndsy questioningly looked at her.

"You have contacted Kareem many times before. Even though he is aware of what we have done, he would still be concerned about Patricia. As long as we can benefit from him..."

"What should I do?" Still puzzled, Lyndsy looked at her suspiciously, eager to know what she had in mind.

Yolanda whispered in her ear.

Her plan excited Lyndsy, and she intently nodded.

"Okay, I know what to do now." Eager to call Kareem, she immediately turned around and picked up her phone.

Yolanda frowned and said in a low voice, "Drink the soup first."

Lyndsy pleasantly beamed at her mother and said in a spoiled tone, "Mom, you are the best." She picked the soup bowl and gulped it down. Lyndsy then made her way up to the second floor.

Yolanda shook her head as she saw her daughter's reaction. She would never forget the embarrassment she had faced those past few days.

Yolanda's plans had backfired as she was now labelled as a vicious stepmother. It was all because of Zac that Patricia had managed to escape.

'Zac, don't blame me.' She wanted to murder him every time she would think about what he had done.

In the morning, Jack looked exhausted and sick as he waited outside Patricia's apartment for her to show up.

"Didn't you sleep well last night?" Patricia asked with concern as soon as she saw him.

He gently shook his head and forced a smile as he walked up to her. He kissed her forehead and handed her a rose. "I'll drive you to work."

He then opened the car door and hinted to her to quickly get inside.

Pursuing her lips, Patricia sighed helplessly as she stared at him. Needless to say, she knew what he had been through yesterday.

Sitting in the passenger seat, she had a puzzled look on her face as she gazed out of the window, looking at the scenery past her. She felt dejected as she looked at Jack from the corner of her eyes. She tried to speak, but words were stuck in her throat.

It was not easy for them to be together. If she...

If she were to say that out loud, it would make him sad, so she slightly shook her head and kept quiet.

After a while, they arrived at the company. Patricia got out of the car, and as she was about to say something to Jack, his phone rang.

Frowning, Jack answered it. Suddenly his expressions darkened, and he hung up the call after he heard what the other person on the line had said.

Guilt was evident in his eyes as he turned to Patricia. He bit his lower lip and slowly said, "I'm sorry, Patricia. I can't come and pick you up after work. Can you..."

"Okay, it's fine. Just go," Patricia said, with a considerate look on her face as she smiled at him.

Jack felt relieved as he saw her expressions. He then beamed at her and quickly drove away.

Patricia waved at him as she watched his car disappear out of her sight. She felt an odd feeling of misery settle in her heart.

She wondered if the decision she had made was too reckless.

Brushing off this thought, she took a deep breath and returned to her usual cold self and with a faint smile on her lips, she quickly walked inside the company.

As soon as she arrived at her desk, she habitually took out some biscuits and milk.

After having her breakfast, she got to work. At noon, she decided to order for lunch and then took a short nap before getting back to work.

The day had passed swiftly. When it was time to get off work, Patricia packed up her things and headed downstairs, where she met Kareem.

"Patricia..." Kareem called out to her as he gently looked at her. His bloodshot eyes and haggard face were proof that he had been in misery.

Seeing this, Patricia couldn't help but sigh and murmured, "Kareem, why do you have to do this?"

She felt helpless as she stared at him, unable to decipher why Kareem had to torture himself and her like this. What was so good about her? She didn't deserve his love for her.

"Patricia, I have told you that I won't give up." A trace of firmness was evident in his eyes.

Despairingly, she shook her head as she pursed her lips, looking at him indifferently. She could see her past self in him, the girl who got hurt deeply for love.

"It's not worth it, Kareem. It's really not worth it."

Patricia didn't know what to say. She just wanted to tell this to Kareem, as if telling herself in the past.

He would only get hurt.

She saw herself in him and realized how deeply she had gotten hurt in the past. It was only until now that she had begun to heal from those painful memories. She wanted to tell him to let go of her as she

wasn't the one for him. There were many exceptional girls he could have a chance to be with so he shouldn't waste any more of his precious time on her.

"It's worth it because it's you." Kareem replied with stubbornness.

Frowning, Patricia sighed helplessly. A hint of gloominess flashed through her stunning eyes as she quietly stood there.

"Can we have dinner together?" With a beseeching look on his face, Kareem felt guilty for what had happened yesterday, which was why he had been keeping a certain distance from her.

Patricia didn't want to agree to his offer. However, after giving it some thought, she nodded slightly, as the pleading look in his eyes stopped her from refusing.

Joy was evident on Kareem's face as he saw her nod. He then immediately opened the car door for her and said in a soft voice, "Patricia, get in the car. I promise you will have a good time this time."

Pursing her lips, Patricia looked at Kareem and sighed in her heart.

Sometimes she wondered if she was too soft hearted, which gave him hope.

She decided to make things clear with him after dinner as she couldn't bear to see him go on like this.

Without knowing what was on her mind, there was a gentle smile on Kareem's face. A trace of mischief flashed through his eyes, as if he was calculating something.

He looked at Patricia. There was greed and persistence added to the tenderness.

[Chapter 317 Framed](#)

The subtle change in Kareem's eyes escaped Patricia— her dull eyes fixed on the scenery outside the window in an absent gaze.

Soon enough, the car came to a halt in front of a Western-style restaurant. The elegant interior was lit with bright, lavish chandeliers while the atmosphere was kept quiet.

"What do you feel like having?" Kareem asked Patricia once they were seated. He wore a bright smile on his face— his expression far from the earlier glumness.

The sight brought discomfort to Patricia. Unconsciously, she pursed her lips, almost regretting her decision to agree to have dinner with him.

He was looking at her with a hopeful expression, and it was making Patricia more and more uneasy. She did not want to give him false hopes.

"The pasta," she answered casually, having little interest in the fancy dishes that the restaurant would undoubtedly serve.

"Drinks?" Kareem asked thoughtfully.

She gave a noncommittal hum as an answer, leaving the choice to him. Patricia was not very particular with drinks. Anything would be fine.

Kareem gave her a gentle smile and called for a waiter. He ordered a cup of coffee for himself and milk for Patricia. Then, he quietly turned his gaze to her, his eyes lingering like a spectator entranced with a piece of art.

Patricia stiffened as he felt the weight of his gaze. She forced herself to sit still, silently counting the seconds. She could leave right after dinner.

As if in mockery of her plight, the dishes took much longer than she had expected. It was about an hour before the food was served.

"You must be hungry. Go ahead and eat," Kareem said, letting Patricia start first. She went ahead, wanting to get this dinner over and done with quickly so she could finally leave.

As she ate, Patricia did not see the strange glint in Kareem's eyes as his gaze went to the cup of milk.

Patricia ate as fast as she could. The pasta was delicious and filling, and she could feel the slight heaviness that came with satiation. She reached for the milk and drank, wanting to ease the feeling of fullness.

She felt more comfortable. Patricia took a few more sips, the warm liquid soothing her throat.

"Do you like the milk? Have some more." Noticing her satisfaction, Kareem offered to call for another cup.

Patricia shook her head slightly. The milk was good, but she didn't want another. Strangely, the earlier relief from the drink seemed to be turning into something peculiar.

"I feel like it's getting hot in here," she said, a frown creasing her forehead. Sweat was starting to dot her brows, and she wiped it off, confused at the sudden change in temperature. She looked at Kareem, her vision blurring even more with each second that passed.

"What's happening? I feel so heavy," Patricia murmured in a daze, her moist lips moving slowly. She looked at Kareem as if she was about to say something but passed out before she could.

Kareem watched Patricia's unconscious figure slumped on the table— his gentle face morphing into

something more sinister. He walked to her side, half-carrying her out of the restaurant.

But instead of her apartment, the car pulled over in front of a luxurious hotel. Kareem asked for a room and placed Patricia carefully on the bed.

His eyes raked over her form, desire coloring his gaze. He bent down, trailing his fingers over her smooth skin.

"You can't even begin to imagine how much I love you, Patricia," he whispered like a man possessed. "I could never give up on you, no matter how much you rejected me." His enamored expression suddenly turned sharp the next moment.

"But you agreed to Jack's proposal, didn't you? Do you know how much that hurt me? Why him? Why didn't you just choose me?" Kareem's voice had come out in anguished whispers, his teeth gnashing from the struggle to keep his voice low. He did not want to wake Patricia.

But at the mention of Jack's name, the hand that was tenderly caressing her tensed up. The man's eyes filled with spite— he hadn't known Patricia longer than Jack, yet Kareem couldn't lose her to him.

He turned his twisted gaze to her.

"Don't worry, Patricia. I will treat you well after tonight," Kareem whispered in her ear. His lips started to wander, kissing every inch of her skin from her earlobe.

His mouth traveled from her ears to her lips. He lingered for a long time, as if never getting enough of her taste.

Reluctantly, he pulled away, his fingers beginning their quick work on her clothes. The next moment, his hands stilled as a blow landed on his head, knocking him out cold.

"Kareem, thank you so much." A soft voice came from behind him. Lyndsy stood by the bed and looked down at the two unconscious bodies, a satisfied smile on her lips.

She did not expect such an intelligent man as Kareem to be so easily fooled into believing that Lyndsy would help him get Patricia.

She hated the bitch to the depths of hell. Why would she help Kareem get her?

Still, things had turned out to work in her favor. If not for Kareem's obsession and Jack being a threat to him, things would have been so much more difficult.

Lyndsy's pretty face lit up as she reveled in her victory. She looked at Patricia, wanting nothing more than to make her disappear.

She bent over the other woman, her smile twisting into a look of menace. "If it weren't for you, my life wouldn't be so miserable," Lyndsy hissed.

As soon as she finished speaking, her finger sank into Patricia's skin, pinching it without mercy.

The skin grew red under the harsh pressure. A slow realization came to Lyndsy, and she withdrew her hands slowly, the corners of her mouth twisting into a sneer. "It doesn't matter," Lyndsy continued. "You will have a much more painful life later on. That's a promise."

With those words, she signaled a man who had been standing beside her the whole time to take Patricia away.

The man put her on his shoulder and walked towards the door without another word.

But before he could leave completely, Lyndsy called out to him. With a smile, she said, "Handsome, tell him that he knows what I want."

The man nodded and strode away.

When he was gone, a cruel smile appeared on Lyndsy's lips, her eyes gleaming with eager malice. She was looking forward to a good show.

Several scenarios played out in her mind— all of them centered in Patricia's ruin. The image of the woman buried in shame made for a tantalizing finale.

The walls rang with vicious laughter, clawing acridly in the space.

[Chapter 318 Zac Made A Move](#)

At the same time, Patricia was taken to another room where a man was waiting for her. He was none other than the nouveau riche who had a grudge against her in the past.

Pure malice engulfed his face, and he had a murderous look as soon as his eyes landed on her.

"Well, well, you bitch finally fell into my hands." The riche roared with laughter as both joy and hatred were evident on his face.

How could he ever forget what had happened before? The humiliation that Patricia had brought on him, was engraved in his heart. He had lost all hope for vengeance but then, to his surprise.....

Seeing Patricia at his mercy, he beamed from ear to ear that his fat chin trembled.

"You bitch, today you are in my hands. Don't think that you have Zac backing you up, and you will be fearless." As he said this, the riche winked at his men beside him.

"Put this bitch down."

The man carrying Patricia kept her down. He then walked towards the riche and whispered something.

Hearing what he had said the riche burst into laughter as if he had heard a hilarious joke. "Okay, I see. I'll give it to her now." He immediately took out a check of one million from his pocket.

"Give this to Miss Sampson. You can handle the rest."

The man respectfully nodded to his command and left right away.

Soon the room seemed to be immersed in an odd atmosphere as Patricia and the riche were the only ones left.

At this moment, Patricia slowly opened her eyes. She felt baffled as she looked around in a daze.

"Where am I?" she mumbled and took in her surroundings.

Her eyes landed on the man sitting on the couch, in an instant fear took over her, and she leaned back.

Patricia was certain that the man in front of her was the riche who loathed her.

Frowning, she bit her lower lip as she saw the viciousness manifested on his face. A trace of horror flashed through her eyes.

"You..."

"What about me? Are you afraid now?" The riche looked at her with a sinister smile as he took a sip of his wine.

His expressions frightened her to the core, and she looked around from the corner of her eyes.

As she read the room, agitation grew in her. She didn't know what to do, but she was sure about one thing that the man in front of her would never let go of her easily.

Staring at him, Patricia knew what he meant.

"What's wrong? Aren't you afraid? But that's good. As long as you serve me well, I might give you some benefits." As he said this, the riche took another sip of wine, his face full of greed.

Hearing this Patricia grimaced, and subconsciously looked at the door, as she tried to figure out an escape route.

The riche seemed to have looked through Patricia's thoughts. He snickered and asked in a low voice, "What's on your mind? Do you want to escape? I'm afraid that's not going to happen. However, if you insist on running away, you can give it a shot."

He casually said that while sipping on his red wine as he stared at Patricia from the corner of his eyes.

The riche's lips curled into a cold smile in an instant as he knew that it would be impossible for Patricia to escape from him.

Patricia disregarded all the given circumstances as she hurriedly ran towards the door with all her might. However, as soon as she opened the door, she saw two flesh walls looking at her fiercely.

It was evident that she couldn't escape at all.

"What the hell do you want?" She couldn't help but turn around and roar at the riche.

"What do I want? Isn't that obvious?" His fat face was full of lust as he sneered at her. He then gulped down the wine and quickly made his way towards Patricia.

He grabbed her wrist and threw her on the bed.

"Isn't this obvious?" The riche's manic laugh echoed through the room as he closed the door and slowly approached her.

His failed attempts in the past had already enraged him. This time he was determined to show her how powerful he was.

Before she could comprehend what was happening, he pounced on her, tightly pressing down her body with his own leaving her no chance to resist.

"Little beauty, stop struggling. No one will come to save you today. "

Patricia trembled in fear and struggled to escape his hold, but he was too strong for her.

Thinking of the dangers she had experienced before, Patricia closed her eyes and smiled coldly, as if she was preparing herself for the imminent pain.

She knew that no one could save her now, even he would not appear.

He had saved her several times in the past.

At that moment, a familiar face flashed through her mind, and Zac's eyes were imprinted, in her memory.

'Zac...

Will he come? Will he save me again? Or...'

Hearing the sound of her clothes ripping, her eyes turned dark, and despairingly she stared at the ceiling as the color drained from her face.

She slowly closed her eyes, thinking she was doomed this time.

"It seems that the previous lesson wasn't enough for you!"

Word by word, Patricia heard a familiar cold voice.

Her eyes shot open as she skeptically looked around, trying to find the familiar figure.

"Zac..." Thrilled, Patricia screamed his name, with a hint of disbelief in her eyes.

'Zac is here! He is really here!'

Unknowingly a tear fell from her eyes as she looked straight at Zac. At this moment, she could only see him.

Zac's intense eyes gleamed as he noticed the trust on her face.

When he saw her pinned down by the riche, he felt enraged, but besides that, there was a trace of bitterness as he wondered, 'Would she give herself to Jack like this?'

He felt miserable as if his heart was stabbed by a dagger.

However, when he again saw the look in her eyes, a gratified smile appeared on his face.

At this moment, Zac was fully aware of the fact that Patricia was counting on him. Thus, in an instant, the haze in his heart over the past few days had completely disappeared.

[Chapter 319 Escape](#)

Infuriated by Zac's words, the rich man glared at him and whispered, "Zac, do you think you can get out of this?"

The next moment, he growled, and several men wearing sunglasses appeared and menacingly stared at Zac.

Seeing this, Zac couldn't help but sneer as he whispered, "Nicholas, you know what to do."

Right after he said that, Nicholas jumped out of nowhere and immediately knocked everyone out.

The rich man was stunned at this. He anxiously stared at Zac.

Before he could comprehend what was happening, Zac kicked him down to the ground and slowly said in a cold voice, "Do you think your men can get me?" As soon as he finished speaking, He gave the man another heavy kick.

The man screamed in pain as he struggled to get up. He glowered at him and furiously said, "Zac, do you think you can go out of here unharmed?"

As he said that, he broke into a fit of laughter and viciously smiled as he stared at him.

Hearing this, Zac was a little stunned, but he decided to ignore the man and immediately he went towards Patricia and covered her with his suit.

"Are you alright?" Zac examined her from head to toe. He felt relieved as he saw that she was okay.

Inexplicably, she felt comforted as she noticed the look in his eyes. She tightly grabbed onto the suit, and his unique scent lingered in her nose.

As she breathed in his fragrance, she somehow felt reassured, and all the fear and anxiety vanished into thin air.

"Don't worry. I'm fine." Patricia beamed with gratitude as she was very thankful that Zac came to her rescue.

However, the next moment, several men in black walked inside the room with threatening looks as they stared at Zac.

The rich man was saved by his subordinates. Nicholas on the other hand had accidentally injured his arm while fighting off those men.

"Boss, Miss Sampson, we really need to go now. We can take care of them later," Nicholas said worriedly. There were only three of them and there were a dozen of men in black, they had no shot at winning.

"What's wrong? Are you afraid now, Zac? I knew you were a coward." The upstart laughed menacingly, as he said in a sarcastic tone, deliberately provoking him.

Unfortunately, Zac didn't take him seriously at all. Instead, he ignored his words.

Seeing that he had shrugged him off, the man shook with rage, breathing heavily as the fat on his chin trembled.

"Kick their asses!"

Hearing this, the men in black standing next to him rushed towards Zac.

But for some reason, Zac couldn't help but smirk as he saw them advancing towards him.

All of a sudden, the men all felt cold.

They froze in their steps and turned to look at the rich man behind them with suspicion.

"If you want to live, get out of here," Zac said with hostility in his voice as he stared coldly at the men with an intense gaze.

Hearing this the rich man snickered with a smug look on his fat face. He then whispered, "Zac, don't you see the situation now? You really think you can escape?" As he said that, he waved his hand, indicating his subordinates to take action.

At that moment before Patricia could ease her nerves Zac turned to Nicholas and ordered in a low voice, "Nicholas, do it."

As soon as he heard him, Nicholas threw something to him and took Patricia to the window. He kicked the window open and walked to the balcony, only to see the boundless sea.

"Nicholas..." Patricia shrieked as the astounding idea struck her, 'Is Nicholas going to jump into the sea with me?'

It was not until now that she realized that there was a vast sea behind the hotel. She wasn't sure if it was a good or a bad thing.

"Miss Sampson, can you swim?" With a concerned look, Nicholas smiled at her as he patted on his chest. "Doesn't matter. I'm here for you so don't worry."

Hearing this, she gulped and subconsciously turned to look at Zac.

He seemed have been overpowered as he fought the men in black.

As Nicholas saw this, he grabbed her wrist and said in a firm tone, "Miss Sampson, we have to jump." Nicholas then immediately plunged into the sea with Patricia in his arms.

Before she had any time to react they had already jumped off. Fortunately, the floor they were on was not very high, and Patricia knew how to swim.

"Miss Sampson, are you okay? Did you get choked?" Nicholas worriedly swam towards her.

She meekly smiled at him and said in a soft voice, "I'm fine, but..."

She couldn't help but look towards the direction of the hotel as she spoke. She sighted that Zac was still fighting those men on the balcony. He couldn't get a chance to jump down.

Panicking, she bit her lower lip as she was anxiously worried about Zac's safety.

She blamed herself for the conflict Zac was in with that rich man. If it weren't for her, he wouldn't have been risking his life.

She had only herself to blame for the danger he was in, which made her feel remorseful.

"Miss Sampson, don't worry. Boss will be fine. Let's go ashore first," Nicholas said in a relaxed tone, he did not seem worried at all.

He did not reckon that those men were on an equal footing with Zac.

Pursing her lips, Patricia cast a worried glance towards Zac before following Nicholas as she swam ashore.

When they went ashore, they suddenly saw Zac jump off the balcony. But the moment he made contact with the water, it instantly turned crimson.

It was blood. Baffled, Patricia's looked stunned as her expressions turned gloomy.

'Would Zac...'

Before she could come to her sense, Nicholas dived into the water and swam towards Zac. The panic was evident on his face.

Patricia was so distressed. She crossed her fingers and kept them against her chest, praying in her heart for Zac's wellbeing.

[Chapter 320 In The Hospital](#)

She almost staggered under the weight of her relief. Nicholas came into her view, dragging Zac's figure with him. Patricia rushed to them, slinging one of Zac's arms over her shoulders to help carry him.

"How is he?" she asked Nicholas, her voice trembling with unspoken fear. From the corner of her eye, she saw the telltale stains on Zac's clothes. The sight of blood made Patricia's stomach turn, her face turning pale.

"Is he..." Her voice trailed off, unable to finish the rest of her words. Patricia looked at Nicholas, silently asking the dreaded question.

The hand of her that was gripping Zac's arm tightened, as if refusing to let him go.

Nicholas comforted her fears with a small smile. "Don't worry, Miss Sampson. He's injured, but he's going to be fine. We just need to get him to a hospital."

The man spoke easily, but it was not enough to assuage Patricia's worries. She could see clearly that there were numerous stab wounds on Zac's body— some shallow, others cutting deeper. He needed treatment as soon as possible. She didn't want to think of other possibilities.

"Let's hurry to the hospital," she said in an urgent voice. Patricia walked as fast as her legs could carry her, dragging Zac's weight along with Nicholas.

Zac's wounds still hadn't stopped bleeding all the way to the hospital. Fresh streams of blood kept flowing out of the lacerations— the metallic scent making Patricia feel sick. To her and Nicholas' relief, they had arrived in time, and the doctors were able to save Zac.

Patricia sat in front of the hospital bed, watching Zac's pale face. Her eyes were filled with confusion, but she did not look away.

Images of what had happened came rushing to her— Zac's determined face, the haste that bordered on desperation to save her. She was alive and safe, but there was no joy in that fact. Only guilt filled her chest, making even breathing painful.

Zac's figure had always stood proud and strong, like a fortress that did not know defeat— far from the body lying limp and unconscious on a hospital bed. And it had all been because of her.

The doctor's prognosis was of little comfort. Zac's wounds were infected, and his condition had to be monitored for the next days. He was alive, but he was not out of the woods yet.

'If he didn't pull through—'

"You're a fool," Patricia uttered, abruptly cutting the unwanted possibility in her thoughts. The sharpness of her words lost their bite to the tremble of her voice and the sadness that filled her eyes.

She knew what made Zac do what he did, but her heart resisted against it.

"I would have to disagree, Miss Sampson. My boss is far from foolish. He knew what he had to do." Nicholas' voice came from the doorway, wrenching Patricia from her thoughts. His eyes betrayed his worry as he looked at Zac, then he turned to Patricia with a solemn expression.

She lowered her head, breaking off from his gaze. She knew perfectly well what Nicholas had meant, because it was the exact same thing that had been torturing her.

Zac loved her. Patricia knew that, and yet...

"Miss Sampson, I am well aware that what I'm going to ask would be overstepping, but I can't help it. Why do you keep refusing him?" Nicholas stepped forward and questioned Patricia.

He had been around Zac long enough to understand Zac's temperament. His boss was a proud man, and yet he had all but abandoned everything for her. No proof of that would be clearer than this moment, when he was lying down, his body weak with stab wounds. But none of these cuts came close to the agony that came with every instance of Patricia's rejection. Nicholas couldn't fathom why she would choose to push Zac away over and over again.

"I..." Patricia began, but her voice trailed off, not knowing what to say. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, then faced Nicholas again. "Nicholas," she attempted once more, her voice low. "There are things between the two of us that you don't know about. You wouldn't understand."

What was between her and Zac could never be explained in a few words. It was too heavy, too painful, that it seemed as if nothing she said would ever be able to encompass it.

"This again. The two of you seem to at least agree on being difficult. He says the same thing every time too," Nicholas said, the words coming out harsh in his frustration. He had grown tired of listening to the same thing again and again.

Patricia was caught off-guard by his remark. Her eyes widened in confusion as she looked at Nicholas, trying to digest what she had just heard.

'He says the same thing every time too.'

She watched Zac with eyes full of bewilderment that turned into a plaintive gaze the next moment.

'It's all over, and there's really no way back.'

Nicholas furrowed his brows but could not say a word. He knew that neither Zac nor Patricia was willing to take the first step to get to the heart of the matter.

And more than anything, he was an outsider. If they didn't want to talk about it, he had no right to intrude.

All of his unspoken worries were revealed on his face. Still, Nicholas chose to offer some flimsy comfort to Patricia. "Don't worry, Miss Sampson," he whispered. "The boss would be fine. You, on the other hand, have yet to eat anything. If you keep that up, you'll find yourself on a hospital bed soon, too. Why don't you go and eat? I'll watch him for now."

Patricia nodded and gave Nicholas a small smile, grateful that he had let the matter go. She stepped out of the hospital room, intending to follow what he had just suggested.

However, she did not expect to run into Jack this time. What's more, he was not alone. A beautiful woman was standing beside him.

She was looking at Jack with eyes full of admiration. Jack, seemingly unconscious of it, only glanced at her blankly—offering short, disinterested answers.

The pair was walking in her direction, and Patricia instinctively hid. She did not want to be found at this moment.

They passed by her unsuspectingly, and Patricia caught bits of their conversation.

"Jack, you haven't eaten anything. You must be hungry," the woman said in a concerned voice.

Jack looked at the woman, indifferent to her blatant thoughtfulness. "I'm not hungry," he answered. "Just worry about yourself. We have to go back quickly." As soon as he finished speaking, Jack walked out of the dining room without another look at the woman, who quickly trailed after him.

Seeing them walk side by side brought a faint, wistful smile to Patricia's lips.

"They are a perfect match." The two of them suited each other. Anyone could have mistaken them for a couple.

Even if she was Jack's girlfriend, Patricia felt no anger at the scene. There was only weariness as she let herself give off a sigh.

For some reason, she felt as if Jack deserved something like this.

If he hadn't fallen in love with her, maybe things would have turned out exactly like she had just seen.

Patricia shook her head, warding off her own thoughts. Right now, this was not her biggest concern.

After dinner, she came back to Zac's ward. She had planned to go back after checking on him one more time.

To her surprise, he had woken up, and Nicholas was nowhere to be found. Patricia saw Zac try to sit up and frowned.

"The doctor said you needed to rest. Just lie back down." She walked over to him and gently pushed him back by the shoulder.

Zac was surprised at seeing her there. He looked at her with wide, confused eyes, thinking that she was a mirage formed by his desperate mind.

"I want to drink some water."

"I'll get it." Patricia made sure that he was propped up comfortably before pouring him a glass of water.

Zac's throat felt so dry that he was in too much of a rush to drink. In his haste, most of the water spilled onto him instead of going into his mouth.

Patricia frowned at his clumsiness and muttered, "What are you doing? You're like a child..."

As she spoke, her hands went to the glass to steady it, then helped Zac dry the wet splotches on him.

She looked like an angry general scolding a cadet. The corner of Zac's mouth lifted into a smile, his eyes lighting up with hints of amusement as he gazed at her.