

The Divorce 451

Chapter 451 Helping Grace

Her expression weighed heavily on me. I asked with concern, "What's bothering you?"

"My body...It's not holding up. I'm always in pain, so I can't sleep at night."

She looked at me helplessly, her voice barely audible.

"The pain, it's just...here..."

"Where does it hurt?"

My eyes narrowed, pressing for details.

"Right here."

She pointed to her abdomen, gently patting it.

"You haven't told Matthew?"

I pressed on, my composure wavering.

Indeed, Grace seemed much thinner than before.

"He's...busy."

Grace's words sounded feeble.

"How long has this been going on?"

Her lips trembled.

"It's not a big deal, just trouble sleeping. I keep thinking about Ava. I can't be there for her, and it's eating at me. I'm afraid I won't have much time left to watch over her."

My heart ached.

After a while, I said, "Take a seat and have some water. I'll go upstairs and be right back."

"No need. Since Ava isn't home, I'll go," she said.

I ignored what she was saying and went straight upstairs.

Atlas was getting ready for the day in our bedroom.

Seeing me come in, he asked, "Who was that?"

"Grace," I said as I freshened up in the bathroom.

"I won't be able to make you breakfast today. I need to take her to the hospital. She seems to be sick."

Atlas glanced at me, and I felt awkward.

"She's Ava's grandmother, after all. She cares for Ava."

"I understand. Do you need any help?"

Atlas didn't blame me and was supportive.

"Should I find a doctor for you?"

"No, it's okay for now.If there's a need, I'll call you!"

I quickly prepared myself.

As I looked at Atlas, I felt a little guilty.

"I'll be home early today.We'll have dinner once you're back!"

He pulled me into his embrace and kissed me gently.

"Okay! I'll be home on time, too!"

It was incredible how close I felt to him.He called this place "home."

"Phone!"

I pointed to remind him.

He nodded, and I picked up my bag and hurried downstairs.

Grace still stood there, uneasy.

Seeing me rush down, she nervously said, "I'll go.I won't delay you from work."

"Let's go together!" I said as I walked toward the door.

"I'll take you to the hospital!"

She stammered, "No, no...You don't have to bother.I..."

"If you say one more word, I won't let you see Ava!"

I knew this was the best way to get her to comply.

Sure enough, she stopped resisting and wiped her eyes.

Honestly, I couldn't understand why I was doing this.I had no hatred toward her, but there was certainly resentment.

She had stood there and watched as her son attack me, even pressuring me with Melanie.

During the baby shower, she seemed smug, as if her new grandson gave her the upper hand.I would never forget that.

However, she was Ava's grandmother, a pathetic woman who had raised a child for another.

Ultimately, her scoundrel son turned against her.

He used to put on such a filial facade, but I wondered if that was all an act for my benefit.

Now, his mother was being abused, and he was pretending to be too busy.

With the friends he had made and the Thompson family's lingering interest, he would have to return eventually.

We arrived at the hospital, and I found Grace a specialist.

After listening to her description, the doctor prescribed a series of tests.

I stayed to see the doctor alone while she waited outside.

The doctor looked at me and asked, "Why didn't you come for a check-up earlier? You're too uncaring toward the elderly. Prepare yourself. She has liver cancer, and it's in the advanced stages."

Chapter 452 Her Time Was Running Out

My head buzzed.

Late-stage liver cancer? My hands turned cold.

I was concerned but never imagined it would be this severe.

How was I going to tell her? I sat there blankly as the doctor talked about the treatment plan.

He finally sighed and shook his head, saying there was little hope.

I was no longer Grace's daughter-in-law, but she was still Ava's grandmother.

She was the last person in the Murphy family who truly cared about Ava, and time was running out.

All I could see was Ava tightly embracing Grace.

After all, we had lived together for many years.

No matter how she treated me, those memories of living together were good.

I didn't even know how I left the doctor's office.

If Grace hadn't seen me come out and called my name, I might have forgotten she was waiting outside.

"Chlo, what did the doctor say?"

She stared at me intently, looking a bit worried.

"He didn't say much. I knew the doctor, so we talked for a while. You'll be fine. He gave you some medicine and advised you to rest more. You should eat better, too."

I reassured her, "I've got the medicine. Let me take you home now."

"No need. I can manage on my own!"

She insisted firmly.

"I'll get the medicine and tell you how to take it."

I held her hand to get the medicine for her.

While sitting in the lobby, I labeled each bottle with instructions on how to use it.

Then I handed them to her.

"Take your medicine on time and get plenty of rest! If you're feeling unwell, you can call me! Of course, when I'm not too busy!"

"Alright!"

There was no trace of her earlier aggressiveness.

Now, she seemed vulnerable.

"And Ava..."

She could not stop worrying about Ava.

I thought about it and realized it was probably time to bring Ava back. Her words were proving true—she was running out of time.

"She'll be back soon!" I said calmly.

"Let's go, I'll take you home!"

"I don't..."

"I'm heading that way, anyway. Come on!"

I interrupted her polite protests.

I wasn't really going that way, and I should have been with Ilvanna at the hospital.

But given her current condition, I couldn't let her go home alone.

As soon as we left the hospital, I received a call from Lauren asking where I was.

I replied that I'd be there soon, then hung up and took Grace home.

I drove straight toward their neighborhood.

However, Grace tugged at my sleeve, timidly saying, "I don't live there anymore."

"Then where do you live?" I asked, puzzled.

She couldn't meet my eyes.

"You...used to live in the house I'm in now.I wanted some peace."

So she was living in our old house.

That meant the larger house had been handed over to Melanie.

I heard that after our divorce, Matthew bought a new house to balance things out with Melanie.

Why would she still want the larger house? I wanted to scoff, knowing she must have moved out to give way to Abby.

I held back those thoughts.

After all, the old lady was in such a state.

Why add to her troubles? That had to be why Grace refused to let me accompany her.

She was probably afraid I would find out about their family's dirty secrets, and she had likely been driven to this place.

She didn't let me go up, and I didn't insist.

I didn't want to go back there either.

I drove out of the complex with a heavy heart.

Just then, Atlas called to ask about the situation.

I said, "Liver cancer."

After that, I had nothing else to say.

He fell silent, too.

Then he said, "Don't worry too much. You should tell Matthew about the results. He's her son and has the right to know."

"Alright."

I had been struggling with what to do next. I didn't know how to handle it.

Atlas gave me a very clear direction. I decisively changed my direction once again, heading straight to Ardora Construction to find Matthew.

Chapter 453 Another Fierce Battle

When I got to Ardora Construction, I took a moment to compose myself, neatly arranging the documents on Grace.

With everything in hand, I stepped out of the car and walked straight in.

This was my second time here.

The first was to request my daughter's school transfer, which caused quite a commotion throughout the building.

Who knew what awaited me this time? Whenever I showed up, things were bound to get lively.

Whenever I met Melanie, I was in for another fierce battle.

I couldn't imagine what family situation had pushed Grace to develop liver cancer. It must have been quite a mess.

Melanie and Abby were not the type to back down easily. I wondered how Matthew could allow his mother to be mistreated.

If it were my mother, I'd demand justice. It was truly too much.

However, it was also Grace's fault for living her whole life so passively.

Abby had ruined her life.

Would Matthew treat me this way if I were in her shoes? But then again, I couldn't bring myself to do what she did. As expected, many people stared at me in astonishment.

The bustling office had fallen eerily silent.

I ignored their looks.

After all, I was there to get things done and leave.

When I got to Matthew's office, I asked his secretary if he was in.

The secretary, who seemed new, asked, "Do you have an appointment?"

She had no idea who I was.

I knocked on the door several times and said, "No, but it's urgent!"

I could tell he was in by the secretary's tone.

The secretary quickly stood by the door.

"Please wait a moment, miss. May I have your name?"

"Chloe Hartz!"

Before the young secretary could check, the door swung open.

Melanie stepped out.

When she saw me, she crossed her arms and blocked the doorway.

"Oh! Look who it is! I didn't expect—"

I brushed past her and strode into the office.

That was when I saw there were several other people there.

I paused for a moment and looked around, feeling slightly awkward.

Still, since I was already there, I kept walking in.

Among the crowd, I spotted an astonished Keegan Thompson.

Matthew was slouched behind his desk, quite fitting for a boss.

When he saw me burst in, Matthew immediately sat up straight.

There was a strange, excited glint in his eyes.

"Chloe?"

This was the first time I had seen him since the party.

Shortly after, Melanie followed in, grabbing my arm.

"Hey! Have you no manners? Did I invite you in?"

I still didn't look at her and headed straight for Matthew's desk.

"Chlo, have you no shame? Why are you here?"

Melanie couldn't stop me at all and erupted in fury.

The others in the office were also looking at me, wide-eyed and speechless, clearly eager for some drama.

I said to Matthew, "I need to talk to you."

He quickly waved his hand and said, "You all can leave. We'll continue in the afternoon!"

Then he turned his eager but confused gaze toward me.

The others reluctantly stood up, clearly not wanting to miss the show.

I didn't pay them much mind.

I looked at Matthew and placed the documents on his desk.

"Do you need something?"

Matthew looked at the papers on his desk, then at me, asking, "What's all this?"

"Take a closer look!"

Matthew carefully examined the documents and frowned.

"From the hospital? Why was my mom at the hospital?"

Chapter 454 A Shocking News

Melanie rushed to the desk.

"Chloe, what do you mean? What hospital? What did you do to her?"

Everyone turned to me. It seemed they genuinely believed I had harmed the old lady. I looked at Matthew.

"You'd better take these documents and consult at the hospital."

I dug through the papers for the doctor's card and handed it to Matthew.

"This is the attending physician, a specialist.If you have any questions, you can ask him.Your mother was diagnosed with late-stage liver cancer."

The news shocked everyone as a collective gasp filled the room.

"What did you say?"

Matthew stood up in disbelief.

"What? Who...Liver cancer?"

"Chloe, you're creating trouble out of nothing.She was perfectly fine, and here you are, cursing her."

Melanie was relentlessly shouting at me.

Then she turned to Matthew.

"You believe whatever she says? She's up to no good!"

Matthew regarded me with suspicion.

"Relieve it or not, I've already taken her to see the doctor and got her prescribed medication.I just brought her home and have not told her about the diagnosis.Now, I'm handing all this over to you.You're her son.It's up to you to decide.I'm leaving now."

I turned to leave, not wanting to stay for another minute.

However, I soon found out that it wouldn't be so easy.

"Stop right there, Chloe! Who do you think you are, taking her to the hospital? Must you use the old lady to stir up trouble?"

Melanie was shouting aggressively.

"That doesn't mean you can waltz back into the Murphy family"

Keegan was looking at Melanie. his lips curled in malicious delight and insatiable greed.

I glanced at Melanie indifferently.

"You're overthinking it."

"Stop pretending and know your place! You've been kicked Out, yet you still agt so high and mighty. What right do you have to take her to the hospital without permission?"

Her words were harsh, but I couldn't be bothered to argue.

What she said was true.

It wasn't appropriate for me to take Grace to the hospital when this idiot was involved.

Her attitude was nothing new.

"How did you find her? What's your real motive? You're divorced. So why are you still meddling in the Murphy family?"

Melanie stepped up to me, blocking my way.

"Chloe, you better explain yourself, or you won't be leaving here today!"

The people about to leave stopped in their tracks, turning back to look at the now-stunned Matthew.

This news appeared to have completely shaken him.

Johnson was in the crowd.

He hurried forward and pulled Melanie back.

"Ms.Melanie, calm down.Ms.Chloe is not that kind of person!"

Little did he know that his words would set Melanie off.

She spat, "Johnson, what the hell are you saying? How do you know she's not that kind of person? Did you sleep with her?"

There was a crisp, resounding smack.

My hand tingled as I burned with fury.

This time, I exerted force.

I didn't realize I could be so precise and swift.

Melanie let out a startled cry, covering her face with her hands and staring at me in horror.

It seemed she hadn't entirely processed what happened.

Only Melanie and I were aware of the force behind the slap.

Blood trickled down from the corner of her mouth.

"You wretched woman, how dare you hit me?"

She lunged at me, trying to scratch me.

Chapter 455 Driving a Wedge Between Them

Matthew roared, "Stop!"

I looked at his handsome face, now twisted with anger and a hint of helplessness.

"Shut up, all of you!"

I cursed silently, wondering why he had not acted sooner.

"Matthew, are you blind? Can't you see she hit me? She's been tormenting me to no end, right under your nose. Are you just going to stand there?"

Melanie took cover behind Johnson, angrily shouting, "Johnson, grow a pair!"

I pulled Johnson aside, glaring at Melanie without backing down.

"I was the one who hit you, and if you dare to cross me again, I'll do it again!"

"I dare you to!"

Melanie yelled at me, her neck straining.

"Try me!"

I stepped forward.

I didn't dare touch her back when she was pregnant.

Now, I couldn't care less.

If I could slap her again, I wouldn't hold back.

The people Matthew intended to dismiss had not left.

They were all watching the scene unfold with amusement and shock.

Perhaps no one expected me to slap Melanie in front of everyone.

I noticed some satisfied expressions among the crowd.

Given the circumstances, I knew I could not let this opportunity pass me by.

I continued to chastise Melanie.

"If you dare talk that way again, I'll rip your tongue out. How could you treat the woman who raised you and changed your diapers so poorly? Don't you have a conscience?"

Melanie knew she was wrong.

She wiped her mouth, which was now a bright shade of red.

I pressed on now that I had realized the truth.

When pushed to the edge, people could be brave.

"You shouldn't treat Grace so poorly, even if she's not your birth mother. You gave her house to your so-called birth mother, who never even looked after you. Then you both physically abused her."

My words were aimed at stirring up trouble among the spectators.

I wanted to rouse Matthew.

After all, his biological mother was the one who was being abused.

"You didn't even spare her clothes. Aren't you ashamed? Melanie, what happened to Grace's old clothes? Don't tell me you don't know. You were wearing a dress I bought for Grace when you and your

mother went to the hospital. Do you deny it?"

I saw Melanie glance at Matthew.

The others present were also visibly shocked.

This was precisely the outcome I wanted.

I wanted everyone to know just how vile Melanie was.

Turning to Matthew, I said, "You abandoned her in that small house. It was I, your so-called "ex-wife," who drove her to the hospital. Isn't Grace your real mother?"

He looked at me, his face growing paler.

His voice was weak as he asked, "How'd you find out she was sick?"

"If she hadn't wanted to see Ava today, I wouldn't have found out. She's in the late stages of liver cancer, on borrowed time. You had no idea."

"Chloe, stop trying to drive a wedge between us!"

Melanie shouted, covering her cheek.

"Drive a wedge? You're not even worth it! Only an idiot like Matthew would be attracted to you. You overestimate yourself"

Chapter 456 Just a Nobody

"You're going off the rails, Chloe!"

Melanie retorted, "You no longer have a say in my family!"

'Yes, I've cut ties with your family,"

I admitted, then turned to Matthew to continue persuading him, "Everyone here should know how our marriage ended, right? "I could've ignored your family's troubles because even your mom watched you assault me without interfering. Your whole family is heartless and selfish."

The crowd exchanged glances, and even Keegan looked at Matthew disdainfully.

Meanwhile, Matthew appeared helpless as I continued, "Your mom's condition saddens me. That's why I took her to the hospital. I don't have time to 'sow discord' like your wife said.

"Melanie thinks I want to return to your family? Yeah, right! I want to thank you for cheating because it allowed me to escape your family. I'm lucky to be far from disgusting monsters like you. I pray my daughter doesn't end up as ungrateful and heartless as you."

"That's enough!"

Matthew looked at me and slumped into his chair like he was about to cry.

If no one else were here, he would have cried already.

After all, no one could be indifferent about their mother's life-threatening illness.

Of course, Melanie could since Grace wasn't her biological mother.

Seeing Matthew utterly broken, I turned to Melanie and said confidently, "If you dare to bear your fangs again, I'll make you regret it. I don't care if I was your sister-in-law. I'll hold you accountable for your

crimes.

"Remember what you ate, wore, and used. Everything came from my wallet. I never expected you to repay me, but don't lose your conscience and who saved your son. He would've died without me breaking my leg to save him. You better stop being nasty, or karma will catch up."

"Wait, what happened?"

Matthew looked at me and asked, "What do you mean when you said you saved my son?"

I smirked at Melanie.

"You always bring chaos wherever you go. Matthew, ask her what happened and why my leg broke. You can check at the hospital, too. Stop being a clueless idiot."

I glared at him.

"Treat your mom better. Her time's running out, so don't leave any regrets."

"My mom...she..."

Matthew paled in distress.

"Chloe, I..."

I had never seen Matthew so helpless, which pained me.

Whenever he had no ideas in the past, I would always make the decisions.

However, I was no longer anyone to this family, as Melanie said.

I was just an outsider now and wasn't desperate to involve myself in their messy affairs.

I composed myself and said indifferently, "That's all I have to say. How you treat your mom is your business. Goodbye."

"Chloe..."

Matthew hurriedly stepped forward, seemingly wanting to say something.

Upon seeing his expression, Melanie wailed, "Matthew. I am your wife!"

I ignored the two and left while the people at Matthew's office door cleared a path.

I noticed the crowd looking at me with respect.

After leaving, I sighed and rubbed my slightly numb palm.

It felt satisfying to slap Melanie, but there was a lingering pain in my heart. Grace was beyond saving, and I didn't know how Matthew would treat her next.

Still, I knew I had done my best.

I felt much lighter after leaving Ardora Construction.

When I entered my car, Lauren called again. Immediately after, I started the car and drove toward the hospital.

Chapter 457 Living on the Edge

When I arrived at the hospital, I noticed the increased security in the VIP ward.

Guards stood every few steps along the corridor leading to Ivanna's ward. I felt uneasy and wondered if something had happened. I quickly approached the ward and saw Lauren inside, but Jared wasn't around.

Ivanna was awake and turned to me when I entered.

Her voice was weak, asking, "Why are you so late?"

"Ugh, don't even ask,"

I complained as I recounted what happened with Grace.

Ivanna and Lauren were surprised, and the latter clicked her tongue disapprovingly.

"Tsk tsk. Grace's past misfortune probably led to this, and Melanie wants to collect her debts."

Ivanna sneered, "None of the Murphys deserve pity. Chlo, don't go soft-hearted again. You should know how pointless it is."

I understood her reasoning for saying that.

After all, she had witnessed the Murphys' cruelty toward me and Ava.

I put down my bag and approached Ivanna's bedside, asking, "What's with the increased security outside?"

Lauren glanced at me and said softly, "I heard Trinity come this morning but didn't enter the ward because Jared stopped her at the door. Jared probably thinks she'll force her way through. He went out, probably for negotiations."

I squeezed Ivanna's hand and reassured her, "There's always a way out. Jared's a real man who should be able to handle the situation well. Consider it a test for him."

I knew Jared was under immense pressure.

I had even told Ivanna about the first discussion I had with him.

From Ivanna's reaction, it seemed Jared hadn't mentioned it to her either.

Awhile later, Ivanna sighed, "Trinity and him are inseparable."

Lauren and I exchanged glances, thinking it was just willful behavior.

Ivanna continued, almost like she was talking to herself, "When the Attwoods and Huffmans allied through marriage, it was to solidify the Attwoods' foundation.

Both families relied on each other to gain power.

"The Huffmans dominated their industry, while the Attwoods needed the former's influence to navigate both worlds smoothly."

Lauren agreed, "Both sides are walking on a knife's edge and are only strong when they work together."

I remained silent as Ivanna continued, "But the Huffmans are weak regarding their male descendants.

They need a mind like Jared's to solidify their power.

It's a strategic alliance.

Jared has never openly acknowledged their feelings for each other, either.

"They resemble nothing more than two gears interlocking and can never separate. If those gears broke, it would destroy the 'machine' they built together."

I asked, "Did Jared disclose these things to you?"

She nodded.

"That's where Jared's dilemma started, so I didn't want to pressure him. I know he cares about me, but both families are interconnected. If one prospers, so does the other. The same goes for failure. Trinity is arrogant because of that."

Ivanna weakly continued, "Jared has been taking risks since he was fifteen.

The Huffmans hold him in high regard, even entrusting him with many critical decisions.

However, they also restrain Jared in some issues.

They don't want to let him go, so they're constantly trapping him.

"He already had disagreements with the Huffmans. I fear this incident could become the catalyst for a confrontation between the two families. I'm afraid the Huffmans might retaliate against Jared."

Lauren and I exchanged uneasy glances as Ivanna painted a murky picture of the underworld that ordinary business people would avoid.

It finally made sense why Jared kept a low profile. I could imagine the type of people he associated with.

He had to be cautious to thrive in such a treacherous world.

I couldn't help but worry about Ivanna and Atlas.

I had a hunch Atlas's relationship with Jared was far from ordinary.

The ATL Empire spanned various industries.

Still, there were likely more covert operations beyond the monopolistic businesses I knew of.

Otherwise, they wouldn't have become the world's top conglomerate. I realized what a remarkable figure Atlas's father, Louis, was.

He had built his business so quickly, which was nothing short of legendary.

However, Louis Pierce met his end at the hands of his own family.

It remained an unsolved case, even today.