

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

C 1121

Nyla paused for a moment, then looked up at Damon. "When did you buy this?"

"On my way back. I saw it while waiting at a red light and thought it would be perfect for you, so I bought it," he answered.

Nyla took the necklace. The pendant was in the shape of a snowflake, sparkling beautifully under the light. She instantly loved it. "It's so beautiful! I really like it."

"I'm glad you like it. So, can you forgive me, just for the sake of this necklace?" Damon asked.

Nyla nodded with a smile. "Alright, I'll forgive you this time, just because of the necklace!"

She walked to the mirror to check how it looked, then placed it into a nearby jewelry box.

A look of confusion crossed Damon's face. "You like it, right? Why aren't you wearing it?"

"I'll wear it the next time I go out. Go check if Buddy is awake. I'll freshen up first," she replied.

He nodded. "Okay."

Nyla went into the bathroom to freshen up.

When she came out, she saw Damon still standing in the bedroom.

Unable to resist, she asked, "Why are you still here?"

"I was waiting for you," he answered.

"Alright then," she replied.

They headed downstairs together, and just as they reached the living room, Mason woke up.

He opened his eyes, saw Damon, and immediately sat up, walking over to him. "Daddy, you're back!"

Damon picked him up, smiling. "Did you listen to Mommy today, Buddy?"

"I did, but..." Mason lowered his head, looking downcast.

Damon and Nyla exchanged a glance before asking, "What's wrong?"

Mason looked up at them, speaking softly. "I want to go to school. I don't want to stay at home all the time."

At first, he had been happy about not having to go to school, but now he was getting bored staying at home all day.

Damon raised an eyebrow, surprised. He hadn't expected Mason to want to go to school.

He set Mason down, crouched to his

level, and looked him in the eye. "Buddy, Mommy and Daddy asked you to stay home to keep you safe. But since you want to go to school, we'll discuss it and see how we can make it work, okay?"

Mason nodded. "Okay."

"Go wash your face. We'll have dinner soon," he said.

After Mason left, Damon turned to Nyla, speaking seriously. "Keeping Buddy at home all the time isn't a solution. He has to go to school."

Children this age needed to be around other kids. Otherwise, they'd become more introverted.

Nyla pressed her lips together. "I thought about that today, too. Now that Gabriel has been arrested, as long as we're careful and take Buddy to school and pick him up daily, he should be fine."

"Right. Have the driver wait half an hour early outside. That should work," Damon replied.

After all, Mason couldn't stay at home forever. He had to go to school eventually.

"Alright. I'll contact the teacher after dinner and have Buddy start school tomorrow," Nyla said.

"Okay," Damon replied.

After dinner, Mason played in the living room while Nyla went with Damon to the study.

She confirmed with the teacher that

Mason could return to school

tomorrow, then looked at Damon. "Today, Wren came to see me. She asked if I could write a letter of forgiveness so that Gabriel could get a fighter sentence."

Damon looked up at her. "And what did you say?"

"Of course, I refused. Gabriel kidnapped Buddy. I will never forgive him," she answered.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

For a mother, nothing was more important than her child.

If Gabriel had kidnapped Nyla, she wouldn't have hated him this much.

"Mm. I'll have someone keep an eye on her. She won't have another chance to come near you and Buddy," Damon said.

He had also heard that Wren's husband had divorced her. Now that Gabriel was in jail, no one knew what crazy things she might do in her desperation.

"Okay, I'll leave you to work now. I won't disturb you," Nyla said.

Damon hesitated for a moment, debating whether or not to tell her what Tom had mentioned earlier.

When he didn't answer, Nyla asked, "What's wrong?"

Damon shook his head. "It's nothing. You go ahead. I'll start working."

Nyla frowned slightly, sensing something was off. "Are you sure? Is there something you want to tell me?"

"No, I'm just still a bit worried about Buddy," Damon replied.

She sighed. "I am too, but he has to go to school. We'll just have to pay extra attention for now."

After Gabriel's arrest, no one should have been able to harm her or Mason anymore.

"Mm," Damon hummed in response.

Nyla left the study, returned to the living room, and called Mason over. "Buddy, I just talked to your kindergarten teacher. You can start school again tomorrow."

Mason's eyes lit up with excitement. "Really?!"

"Yes. Now go upstairs and pack your schoolbag," she instructed.

"I'm going right now!" Mason exclaimed, running upstairs, his joy evident in every step.

Nyla watched him go with a soft smile.

In the detention center...

Wren finally saw Gabriel, guided by a lawyer.

When she saw him looking haggard and pale, with cracked, dry lips, her eyes

filled with tears. "Gabriel... how are you?"

Gabriel looked at her, his expression cold. "What do you want?"

Wren froze, her voice trembling. "Gabriel, I came to see you. No matter how long you're sentenced, I'll wait for you."

Gabriel didn't respond.

Frustrated, she gritted her teeth. "I went to see Nyla today. I asked her to write a letter of forgiveness, but she refused... How did I never realize she was this malicious?"

Thinking of Nyla's cold rejection that afternoon, Wren seethed with anger.

A flicker of something unreadable crossed Gabriel's eyes.

"Don't go near her again," he said coldly.

Wren's frustration boiled over. "After everything she's done to you, you're still defending her? Are you out of your mind?!"

"It's none of your business how I feel," Gabriel replied. "Just live your own life from now on. Pretend you never had a son like me."

Wren stared at him, her voice rising with desperation. "Live my life? What life do I have now? I've been divorced. Raymond kicked me out. I have no one to rely on. How am I supposed to live the rest of my life? Beg on the street?"

Gabriel's expression didn't waver. "I bought you an insurance policy before. You'll get 7,000 dollars

month. If you budget carefully, it

should be enough."

"What?" Wren asked, stunned. "When did you do that? I didn't know about it!"

"It doesn't matter when I bought it," Gabriel said. "Just go. Don't come back here. My lawyer will handle the rest."

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

"Then what about you? What are you going to do?" Wren asked, her face etched with sadness and pain as she looked at Gabriel.

No matter what happened, Gabriel was her only son. If he couldn't make it out of this situation, she felt her own life would lose its meaning.

Gabriel's expression remained indifferent. "What happens to me is none of your concern. Just take care of yourself."

"What kind of nonsense is that? How can I not care about you?" Wren demanded.

Gabriel glanced at her, his eyes narrowing slightly. "Even if you want to care, you can't do anything about it.

"Don't come to see me again. I won't meet with you again. Just live your life with the money you'll be getting each month.

"As for Wilhelm, with Jane supporting him, he won't have to worry about food or clothing. There's nothing for me to stress over."

Wren's face drained of color, and she stared at him, her lips trembling. "Why do you sound like you're saying your last words... Gabriel, don't scare me like this."

Gabriel chuckled bitterly, meeting her gaze. "Even if I don't get the death penalty, I'll likely be sentenced to life. What's the difference between that and being dead?"

"Gabriel, even if you're sentenced to life, I'll wait for you out here. You must promise me you won't do anything foolish. I couldn't handle it," Wren pleaded.

A flicker of something passed through Gabriel's eyes before he lowered his gaze.

In a low voice, he said, "Mom, just pretend you don't have me as your son anymore. I've let you down, and I've failed Wilhelm too."

"Gabriel—" Wren started, but the lawyer beside her interrupted, informing her that visitation time was up.

She quickly turned back to Gabriel. "Son, no matter what happens, I'll be waiting for you. Don't you dare do anything foolish. If you do, I won't survive it either!"

But no matter how much she pleaded, Gabriel didn't lift his head again.

After being escorted out of the police station, Wren was sobbing uncontrollably.

She turned to Philip, her voice shaky. "Mr. Higham, please, you have to help my son. Don't let him do anything reckless!"

If Gabriel truly harmed himself, she wouldn't survive it either.

"Ms. Hackett, don't worry. I'll do my best. For now, let's focus on the insurance payout. We'll deal with the rest afterward," Philip replied.

Wren nodded. "Alright, thank you, Mr. Higham."

...

It took several hours to finalize the paperwork for the insurance payout.

"Ms. Hackett, everything is in order now. Starting on the 15th of each month, the funds will be deposited directly into your account. If you encounter any issues, don't hesitate to contact me," Philip said.

"Thank you," Wren replied.

After a moment of hesitation, she asked, "Mr. Higham, based on your experience, how long do you think my son will be sentenced?"

Philip paused briefly before responding carefully. "Ms. Hackett,

it's

it's hard to say right now, but considering the charges-stealing critical trade secrets from a competitor and kidnapping-he's looking at a minimum of ten years."

Truthfully, it could be much worse. He knew sharing that would only heighten her anxiety.

Wren turned even paler, her voice trembling. "If we get a letter of forgiveness, will that help with a lighter sentence?"

Philip shook his head. "It wouldn't make much of a difference."

"Alright... I understand. Mr. Higham, please do everything you can to save him. Otherwise, his life will truly be over," Wren pleaded.

"I'll do my best, Ms. Hackett. But this case has a complete chain of

evidence. To be honest, a law ne

only do so much here," Philip confessed.

can

Chapter 1124

With or without a lawyer, the outcome of Gabriel's case wouldn't have been much different.

"I understand... as long as you try your best. Even if the result isn't good, I'll accept it," Wren replied.

"Alright," Philip answered.

When Damon heard that shareholders from Nyce Tech wanted to sell their shares and flee, he snickered.

"Don't let them cash out. If they do, we won't be able to recover Prospectus Technology's previous losses," he instructed.

"Understood, Mr. Sumner," Spencer replied.

"Good. You can leave for now," Damon said.

Spencer turned to leave the CEO's office but paused at the door when he saw Tom approaching.

"Mr. Genge," he greeted.

Tom nodded. "I'm here to see Mr. Sumner. Is he available now?"

"Please wait a moment. I'll check," Spencer replied.

Two minutes later, he returned and said, "Mr. Genge, Mr. Sumner is waiting for you inside."

"Thank you, Mr. Hogg," Tom replied.

"You're welcome," Spencer answered.

Tom entered Damon's office and went straight to the desk, sitting down. "Mr. Sumner, Drake knows I told you everything about him. He came to my house to threaten me. Don't forget our agreement-you said you'd help me."

Damon leaned back in his chair, his expression calm. "Of course. I'll help you, but only if you're completely honest with me. If you give me half-truths, don't expect me to go all out for you."

Tom fell silent. He should have known Damon wouldn't trust him easily.

Seeing Tom's flustered expression, Damon added, "Of course, you could always

side with Drake and go against me. That's fine by me, too."

Tom let out a nervous laugh. "Why would I do that? I already told you about Drake's activities. Obviously, I'm not on his side anymore."

Damon chuckled, clearly unconvinced. "It doesn't matter who you side with. What matters is that you don't flip-flop."

"One minute you're on this side, the next minute you're on that side. When you get exposed, it'll be quite ugly."

With that, silence fell over the office.

Several minutes passed before Tom finally spoke. "You're right, Mr. Sumner, I did only tell you half the

truth before. But since I'm here today, I've made up my mind"

en

Damon nodded. "Good. Now, are you ready to share the rest?"

"I will, but how can I be sure you can actually deal with Drake?" Tom asked.

He'd be seeking his own death if

er

Damon were weaker than Drake. He had seen Drake's methods over the years abroad-he didn't even want to recall them.

"If you don't cooperate with me now, you won't have any other options left," Damon said simply.

Tom's face turned grim.

Damon's words hit a nerve-there was no going back for him. Even if he tried to reconcile with Drake, he'd likely end up discarded after being used.

Besides, he was done living like a dog at Drake's feet.

"Fine. I'll take the risk." Taking a deep breath, Tom looked at Damon with a serious expression. "Drake is

veli

working for the Nixons. That much you already know.

"But the head of the Nixons, Edward Nixon, has been in declining health for years.

His children are now fighting over control of the family business."

Damon frowned. "And how is this connected to Nyla?"

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

"I overheard it earlier. Apparently, Nyla is related by blood to a key member of the Nixons, but I don't know exactly who," Tom revealed.

To be honest, he didn't even know who the main members of the Nixons were. He had only heard of them but had never met anyone from that family.

From what he had gathered, even someone like Drake would need to schedule an appointment far in advance just to meet with them.

Damon's gaze hardened. His first thought was of Nyla's mother. After her divorce from Harrison, she had reportedly left for overseas in a hurry.

Could it be that she had somehow ended up becoming a member of the Nixons and gained a position of influence? If that were the case, it would explain why Drake was after Nyla.

Damon looked up at Tom. "Got it. Is there anything else you know?"

"Drake's pretty guarded around me, so he doesn't let me in on much. But I do have a close relationship with one of his trusted associates.

"One time, we were drinking, and his associate let it slip. Drake's ultimate goal with Nyla is to marry her and use her as a stepping stone to gain entry into the Nixons," Tom replied.

If Nyla was indeed blood-related to a core member of the Nixons, marrying her could be a legitimate way for Drake to secure a position in the family.

As soon as Tom finished speaking, the atmosphere in the room turned ice-cold. He shivered involuntarily and glanced at Damon, whose expression had darkened to the point of startling him.

It quickly dawned on him—any man would be furious hearing about another man plotting to take his wife.

"Uh... Mr. Sumner... that's all I know. I swear!" Tom stammered nervously.

Damon's icy gaze locked onto him. "You're sure you're not holding anything back?"

"I'm sure! I've already chosen to side with you—why would I hide anything?"

"The more you know about Drake, the better chance you have against him, which helps me too, doesn't it?" Tom defended himself.

If Damon didn't know anything, going up against Drake would be a death sentence. At least now, Damon had some leverage.

"Fine. I get it. You can go now," Damon dismissed him.

"But... what should I do next? What if Drake comes after me again?" Tom asked.

He had just spilled everything to Damon. If Damon didn't protect him, Drake would never let him off the hook.

"Don't worry. I'll arrange for someone to protect you. Drake won't have another chance to get to you," Damon reassured him.

"Really?" Tom's face lit up with relief. "Mr. Sumner, please make sure to send enough people to protect me. Drake has extensive connections, even in this country."

Damon frowned. "Who does he have connections with here?"

Tom paused, then said, "A lot of people. I write up a list for you. But I know about-there's likely more keep in mind, these are just the ones

Damon's expression remained icy. "Alright."

Tom took a piece of paper and jotted down a list of names he could remember.

Damon's expression grew even colder as he read the dozen or so names on the list-all prominent figures in the business and political world.

Tom sighed. "That's everyone I can think of for now. There's probably more. Honestly, going up against him won't be easy..."

If he weren't so desperate to break free from Drake's control, he wouldn't have bet everything on

Damon. Even then, he didn't have high hopes for Damon.

"Alright. If you think of anything else, let me know immediately," Damon reminded him.

"Got it. Do I still need to go back to my place?" Tom asked.

"No. Someone will come to get you soon, and you'll go with them," Damon replied.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Tom nodded. "Okay... you be careful too."

Once Damon's people arrived to secure Tom, he planned to find a way to escape the country, change identities multiple times, and hide out in some remote area.

By then, even Drake would have trouble tracking him down.

"Got it," Damon replied.

After Tom left, Damon circled the names on the list tied to business, crossed out a few, and sent the remaining names to Spencer. He instructed him to arrange meetings with those individuals.

Despite finishing the task, Damon's tense expression didn't relax.

Drake was proving to be even more formidable than expected. His extensive connections in the city suggested he'd been laying the groundwork for years.

Could Drake have known about Nyla's background all along?

As more questions swirled in Damon's mind, his expression grew colder.

No matter what, he would not let anyone disrupt the peaceful life they had built.

...

That evening, Nyla was on her way to pick up Mason from school when her car was abruptly surrounded and forced to stop.

A group of men in black approached her car, and one of them spoke up. "Ms. Kinsey, our boss would like to meet with you."

Nyla's expression remained cold as she stayed in the car. "Who is your boss?"

"You'll find out if you come with us," the man answered.

Gripping the steering wheel tightly, Nyla felt a surge of unease. Her voice was firm but frosty. "I'm not going anywhere with you. You have ten seconds to clear out, or I'll call the police."

The leader of the group chuckled. "Feel free to call the police, Ms. Kinsey."

Nyla's heart sank. Their tone made it clear that calling the police wouldn't make a difference. She quickly grabbed her phone and dialed Damon's number.

After waiting for a while, there was no answer.

Lowering the phone, she realized there was no signal. Her face turned pale.

The man in black smirked. "Don't worry, Ms. Kinsey. Our boss means no harm. He just wants to meet you. I assure you, nothing will happen to you."

Nyla let out a cold laugh. "Tampering with my phone signal is your idea of no harm? If your boss wants to see me, why doesn't he come himself? Forcing me to go to him-how is that any different from kidnapping?"

BUMS

The man frowned, hesitated, and then stepped aside to make a call.

About a minute later, he returned to Nyla's car. "Ms. Kinsey, our boss will be here in ten minutes."

Nyla was speechless. She was now convinced these people were insane, and their boss was just as bad.

However, her car was completely boxed in. Even if she wanted to drive away, she couldn't.

And her phone? Useless.

During the ten minutes of waiting, Nyla's mind raced through every possible worst-case scenario.

Just as she was about to write a goodbye note in her phone's memo app, the so-called boss arrived.

He was dressed in a crisp white suit. His proportions were impeccable-tall with long legs—and he exuded an air of elegance.

Wearing sunglasses that concealed half of his face, his visible features revealed a strikingly handsome man-refined to the point where he looked more like a model than someone involved in shady dealings.

swnevern

He approached Nyla's car slowly, his gaze taking in the scene.

After noticing how her car was surrounded, he removed his sunglasses and shot a cold glance at the men around him. "I asked you to invite her to meet me. Is this what you call an invitation?"

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Bruce Pollock quickly lowered his head, his voice tinged with fear. "I'm sorry, Boss... I didn't think it through."

"This month's salary is docked. If this happens again, you won't stay by my side," the man warned.

"Understood," Bruce replied.

"Well? Are you just going to stand there and wait for me to move these cars myself? Get them out of the way!" The man's tone was icy, and his cold stare made Bruce shiver.

"I'll handle it right away!" Bruce answered.

The man turned back to Nyla, his expression shifting to one of guilt. "Ms. Kinsey, I must apologize. My subordinates lack proper discipline. I take full responsibility and hope you can forgive their behavior."

Nyla stared at him coldly. "There's no need to play the good cop. Who exactly are you, and why did you block my car?"

The man chuckled lightly at the distrust in her eyes. "Ms. Kinsey, I truly am sorry. How about stepping out of the car so we can find a quiet place to talk?"

"I'm not getting out of this car. Who knows what you're planning-probably to kidnap me!" Nyla retorted.

"If I had intended to kidnap you, I wouldn't have come here myself. Please, rest assured-I won't harm you," the man promised.

Nyla sneered. "Do you even believe your own words? I still don't know who you are or what you want."

The man looked like danger itself, and she'd be crazy to get out of the car.

Still, it didn't seem like he wanted her life. If he had, he wouldn't have come alone.

No matter what, Nyla wasn't about to leave her car. As long as she dragged this out, there was a good chance Damon would notice she couldn't be reached. He would send people to search for her soon enough.

The man raised an eyebrow. "My apologies. I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Drake Mummery, and I'm the vice CEO of MK Company."

Hearing the name, Nyla tightened her grip on the steering wheel, her face paling.

Noticing her reaction, Drake chuckled. "Ms. Kinsey, you don't seem all that surprised to hear my name."

"Should I be?" Nyla countered.

"Most people would be confused when they hear the name of someone they don't know," Drake replied.

"Sorry, I'm not most people. Now, Mr. Mummery, what do you want from me?" Nyla asked.

Despite her icy tone, Drake remained unbothered, smiling as he said, "Ms. Kinsey, I came to discuss a matter regarding your mother. It's a bit complicated, and it will take an hour or two to explain. Do you have time to talk?"

"I'm sorry, I have to pick up my child. I don't have time," Nyla replied.

She restarted her car.

Drake didn't try to stop her. Instead, he smiled. "Ms. Kinsey, I'm sure we'll meet again soon."

Nyla didn't respond. She stepped on the gas and sped off.

Bruce approached Drake. "Boss, shouldn't we have stopped her?"

Drake shot him a cold glare. "Idiot!"

Nyla could inherit the Nixons. Offending her now would close that door forever. Drake had no intention of being anyone else's pawn for the rest of his life.

The only way for him to take control of the Nixons was to marry Nyla. But first, he needed to deal with Damon.

"What's the update on Tom?" he asked.

"This morning... he went to Prospectus Technology again and hasn't come out since," Bruce replied.

Drake's face darkened with anger. "Do you really think he'd spend that long at Prospectus Technology, è given his relationship with Damon? He's probably already been moved somewhere safe by Damon. Useless!"

Bruce paled. "I'll look into it right away!"

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

On the drive back, Drake glanced at his assistant, Anna Randolph, who was sitting in the front seat. "What's Alexander's current status?"

"Mr. Mummery, Mr. Kinsey has been meeting with clients these past two days. Aside from that, he's been staying at his hotel and hasn't done anything unusual," Anna reported.

"That's it?" Drake frowned, sensing there was more to Alexander's return.

He suspected it had something to do with Nyla. After all, Edward was on shaky ground, and internal chaos was imminent.

"Should we assign more people to keep an eye on him?" Anna asked.

"No. Increasing surveillance might tip him off," Drake replied.

"Understood. Are we heading back to the hotel now?" Anna asked.

Drake let out a cold laugh. "No. We're going to the Genge residence."

Not long after arriving at the Genges', Bruce returned with Tom in tow.

Drake lounged on the couch, his posture relaxed as he watched Tom with an amused expression.

On the other hand, Tom was visibly trembling with fear.

He had made the wrong bet.

He'd thought Damon could protect him for at least three days, giving him enough time to switch identities and flee the country. But now, he realized how naive and foolish he'd been.

Seeing Tom's stunned expression, Drake chuckled and took a sip of coffee from the table.

He grimaced slightly. "The coffee here is terrible, but I suppose it'll have to do. It's not like Meristate, after all."

Perhaps realizing his fate, Tom found some courage and shouted, "Mr. Mummery! Do whatever you want to me, but I won't help you anymore!"

He'd had enough after all these years. He'd rather see the Genge Group collapse than be Drake's puppet.

Drake raised an eyebrow. "Who said I was going to kill you? This is a lawful society. Killing you would land me in prison."

Tom let out a bitter laugh. "Then what do you want from me?"

"I just want to know what you told Damon," Drake replied.

"Everything," Tom spat. "Whatever you think I told him, I did. If you want to know more, ask him yourself!"

Drake's tone remained casual. "Why bother asking him when I can hear it from you?"

At his signal, Bruce's men dragged a woman into the living room.

When Tom saw that it was Valarie, his eyes widened, and he glared at Drake. "If you dare harm her, I won't let you get away with it!"

"What happens to her depends on you," Drake said calmly. "Cooperate, and I might consider letting both you and the Genge Group go. After all, the Genge Group is of no real use to me"

In Drake's eyes, the survival of the Genge Group was a mere whim.

Tom's face went ashen, his heart pounding in panic. "How can I trust you're telling the truth? What if you go back on your word after I tell you everything?"

"You don't have a choice," Drake replied, his tone unwavering.

Only those with leverage could sit at the negotiation table. In Drake's eyes, Tom didn't even qualify for a seat.

Tom turned ghostly pale, as if his heart had been tossed into a fiery pit of despair.

Then, suddenly, an idea struck him.

He lifted his head and said, "You've always wanted to marry Nyla, haven't you? Valarie is her best friend. If you hurt her, Nyla will never forgive you, and you'll lose any chance of marrying her!"

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

Drake smirked. "You really think I'd let her find out?"

Tom's face darkened. "Drake, so no matter what I do-whether I talk or stay silent -you never intended to let me or Valarie walk out of this alive, did you?"

"I've already told you, your survival depends on whether you tell me the truth. If you insist on lying and sealing your own fate, there's nothing I can do for you," Drake countered.

Tom clenched his fists at his sides, a deep sense of regret washing over him.

If only he hadn't accepted Drake's help in the first place, he wouldn't have ended up in this mess. Regret, however, was useless now.

If it were just him, he wouldn't care whether he lived or died. But now that Valarie had been dragged into this, it felt as though Drake had seized him by his weakest point.

Taking a deep breath, Tom was about to speak when the sound of approaching footsteps echoed from the doorway.

Everyone in the living room turned to look.

Damon strode in, flanked by more than a dozen men who quickly surrounded Drake and his group.

Drake's face darkened, while Tom's eyes lit up with relief.

"Mr. Sumner!" he called out.

He knew it-trusting Damon had been the right decision. He and Valarie were saved!

Damon didn't acknowledge him or respond. Instead, he walked straight over and sat down across from Drake.

"Mr. Mummery, this is Saintornia, not Meristate. You don't get to act out here," Damon said, his tone cold and sharp.

Drake leaned back, his posture relaxed. "Mr. Sumner, I've heard a lot about you. But this is strictly between Mr. Genge and me. I suggest you stay out of it, unless you want to get yourself into trouble."

"Mr. Genge is my friend. His business is my business. And while we're at it, let's not forget how you blocked my wife's car on the road recently. Shouldn't we settle that, too?" Damon retorted.

Drake narrowed his eyes. "Mr. Sumner, let me correct

you-according to what I know you and Ms. Kinsey aren't married. At best, you're just cohabiting

"As for Mr. Genge's issue, he owes me tens of millions. Are you planning to pay it off for him?"

The living room fell into tense silence, the air almost crackling as though a taut wire was about to snap.

After what felt like an eternity,

Damon broke the silence, his voice icy. "So just because Mr. Genge

owes you money, you think it's acceptable to kidnap an innocent woman to threaten him?"

"Kidnap?" Drake chuckled. "Mr. Sumner, I merely invited Ms. Weir here for a conversation."

"Well, let's see if she agrees. I've already called the police. They'll be here soon, and you can explain your version to them. Let's find out if they buy it," Damon said.

Drake let out a low laugh, then stood up, towering over Damon. "Fine. I'll remember this, Mr. Sumner. Let's see what happens next."

He glanced at Bruce. "Let's go."

With that, Drake turned and left. His men quickly followed, leaving the living room half-empty.

Damon turned to Spencer. "Station our people outside and make sure they're gone."

"Understood, Mr. Sumner," Spencer replied.

Once Damon's men left, Tom rushed to Valarie's side and began untying her ropes.

"Valarie, I'm so sorry. This is all my fault," he apologized.

As soon as the tape on Valarie's mouth was removed, she shoved him away and scowled. "Stay away from me!"

Tom froze, his expression stiffening at her look of disgust. He withdrew his hands awkwardly.

Valarie must detest him now. They'd been broken up for so long, yet she had been implicated and kidnapped out of the blue.

Trading My Ex for His Uncle

"I'm sorry. I promise this won't happen again," Tom assured.

Valarie removed the rope from around her and looked coldly at him. "Tom, your assurance means nothing to me, and I don't want to hear it. I just hope this is the last time I ever see you."

With that, she turned and started to leave.

Tom hurried to block her path. "Valarie, I didn't want this to happen either. I'll assign someone to protect you—"

She cut him off sharply, "Enough! I don't need your protection. If you have time to worry about me, use it to clean up your mess so you stop dragging others down!"

She spat the words with contempt, then stormed off without sparing him another glance.

Tom moved to chase after her, but Damon stopped him.

"You're in no position to chase her. Even if you catch up, it won't change anything," Damon said.

Tom froze in place, watching helplessly as Valarie disappeared.

Seeing his pale face, Damon frowned. "She's gone. My men will escort you to safety and ensure Drake doesn't find you again."

Tom lowered his head. "That won't be necessary."

"What do you mean?" Damon asked.

"I'm done running," Tom replied.

Drake had found him once, and he would undoubtedly find him again.

His influence in Saintornia was far greater than Tom had anticipated. And if he fled, who knew what Drake might do to Valarie?

He wasn't going to run anymore. He would stay and fight Drake with Damon.

He lifted his head to meet Damon's gaze. "As long as Drake remains MK's vice CEO, there's nowhere I can hide. I'll stay and fight him with you."

The living room fell silent as Damon studied him. "You're sure about this?"

Tom wasn't even confident about taking Drake down. What was more, he had investigated and discovered that the Genge Group had managed to survive because of Drake's investment. For Tom to go against him was futile.

Tom nodded firmly. "I'm sure. Drake. knows I've told you everything about him. That's a betrayal he won't

forgive. My only choice is to team up with you to take him down."

Besides, he had evidence-proof of Drake's dirty dealings over the years. Any

one of those would be enough to ruin him.

The thought gave Tom a sense of confidence.

Damon replied, "Fine. I'll assign people to protect you. Be careful in the meantime.

Don't give him any chance to grab you."

"I will," Tom answered.

"If there's nothing else, I'll head out. Keep in touch," Damon said.

"Got it," Tom replied.

He watched Damon's retreating figure, hesitating several times as he wanted to call him back, ultimately staying

"Content

The evidence he held against Drake was his last card to play. He couldn't afford to reveal it just yet.

When Damon returned to his villa, he found Nyla sitting on the couch, lost in thought.

Mason quietly worked on his homework nearby.

Changing into house slippers, Damon walked over to Nyla and sat beside her. "Nyla, what are you thinking about?"

Startled, Nyla turned toward him. "You're back? I'll let Lydia know to get dinner ready."

She started to stand, but Damon took her hand, stopping her. "What were you so deep in thought about just now?"