

Trading My Ex for His Uncle (Nyla)

#Chapter 832

Chapter 832

Nyla was taken aback. She hadn't expected Jane's son to be shunned by his classmates, but she didn't feel the slightest sympathy.

"Ms. Wilkie, before the facts were even clear, you threatened to call the police. And after discovering that it was your son lying to get mine in trouble, you didn't even make him apologize. I'm not sure where you get the audacity to come and question me now," Nyla retorted. "I'm not like you. I don't have that kind of sway over the school's vice principal. As for your son being left out, I don't know how it happened, but kids naturally prefer to play with those who are kind and honest. They don't appreciate a liar. Instead of blaming me, maybe you should reflect on your own parenting," Nyla said.

Jane's face contorted in fury as she replied, "Nyla, just because Damon's backing you, don't think you can do whatever you "

Nyla didn't let her finish and hung up, unwilling to waste any more time on someone who wouldn't listen.

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Jane was so angry she nearly threw her phone. She gritted her teeth, about to call back, when Gabriel rang in.

"Jane, where are you right now?" Gabriel asked.

Jane took a deep breath to calm herself, though her irritation still seeped through. "I'm at the office, heading over to Wil's school. He just called, saying all his classmates are ignoring him. No one will talk to him."

"I'll go talk to Wil. Theo's getting in touch with Starlite's general manager. I'll send you the address-go there now. If he beats us to the Golden Waters Resort project, he'll officially join the Wilkie Group. Your failed negotiation with Damon will also upset Grandpa," Gabriel reminded. Jane's expression darkened. "Understood. I'm on my way."

After hanging up, she received the address Gabriel sent and immediately drove off.

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Gabriel smirked in his office after sending the address. He tossed on his jacket and headed out.

At the same time, his secretary entered with a stack of files. "Mr. Hackett, these documents need your signature today."

He gave a slight nod. "Leave them on my desk. I have to head out."

"Understood, Mr. Hackett," she replied.

Gabriel's office was only a short drive from Wilhelm's school, so he arrived in less than half an hour.

Having previously visited the school with Pedro and Jane when the Wilkie Group made a donation, the security recognized him and opened the gate.

After parking, he called Wilhelm's teacher and learned Wilhelm was in the office. As soon as he entered, he saw Wilhelm standing in the corner with his head down.

"Wilhelm," Gabriel called.

Wilhelm looked up at the sound of his voice.

"Daddy!" he cried. He ran over and clung to Gabriel's leg, looking wronged.

"They're all being mean to me. I don't want to be in that class anymore and I don't want to be friends with them either. Daddy, make the principal kick them out!" he demanded.

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Wilhelm's face was scrunched up in anger, fists clenched as if he wished all the kids who wouldn't play with him would just disappear.

Gabriel frowned and squatted down to be at Wilhelm's eye level. "Wil, did you forget what Daddy told you yesterday?"

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Gabriel's voice was quiet, and his expression calm, but Wilhelm couldn't help feeling a bit afraid.

"I... I didn't forget..." he mumbled, lowering his head to avoid Gabriel's gaze.

"Since you didn't forget, then tell me did you apologize to Mason when you got to school today?" Gabriel asked.

"No..." Wilhelm pressed his lips together, his face puffing with frustration. He had no intention of apologizing-he couldn't stand Mason!

"Wil, it's only when you recognize and correct your mistakes, and show the courage to apologize, that other kids will enjoy being around you.

"Remember, you lied and said Mason pushed you when you actually fell on your own, which made the other kids afraid to play with you," Gabriel explained.

Wilhelm's eyes filled with confusion and bewilderment.

"Is that really why?" he asked.

What his father was saying didn't match what his mother had told him. She had said that, since their family donated a lot of money to the school, he could do whatever he wanted without worrying about the other kids. Who was he supposed to believe?

Gabriel nodded and replied, "Yes. Or are you too shy to apologize? Want me to go with you?"

Wilhelm wanted to say he didn't want to apologize to Mason, but he nodded reluctantly under his father's gaze. "Okay."

"Alright. Let's ask your teacher to call Mason over, and you can apologize in front of me," Gabriel said.

"Alright," Wilhelm replied.

Laura had spent half the morning trying to reason with Wilhelm to no effect, yet here was Gabriel, resolving the issue with a few simple words.

Relieved, she quickly said, "I'll bring Mason right over."

Soon, Mason entered the office with Laura.

When Gabriel saw Mason, his hands

clenched instinctively, his eyes narrowing at the boy's face. Mason's resemblance to Damon was striking, and a shadow crossed Gabriel's

gaze.

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Despite that, he was skilled at concealing his emotions. He quickly smiled and told Wilhelm, "Wil, Mason is here now. Go ahead and apologize to him." Wilhelm reluctantly turned to Mason and said, "Mason, I'm sorry."

Mason merely looked at him without saying anything.

Wilhelm's irritation flared at Mason's indifference, and he demanded, "Hey, I apologized already! What more do you want?"

"Just because you apologized doesn't mean I have to accept it," Mason replied, his expression cold and serious-like a miniature version of Damon.

Gabriel's gaze hardened slightly. He

knelt, smiling at Mason. "Mason, Wilhelm shouldn't have acted the way he did, and I've already spoken to him about it. Can you forgive him?"

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Mason glanced at Gabriel, his expression still impassive. He didn't care much for this smiling, smooth-talking man, so he stayed silent.

Gabriel was momentarily startled by Mason's eyes which resembled Nyla's and softened his expression.

Unsettled by Gabriel's odd gaze, Mason frowned and turned to Laura. "Ms. Ferrier, I'd like to go back to class now."

Sensing that Mason was unwilling to forgive Wilhelm, Laura wanted to encourage him to be more forgiving, but then she remembered the principal's note about Damon's

position and status.

Finally, she looked at Gabriel and asked, "Mr. Hackett, would you be open to arranging a time to discuss this with Ms. Kinsey or Mr. Sumner in private?" Gabriel's eyes brightened, and he nodded to Laura. "Sure, thank you for handling this."

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"Oh, it's no trouble at all. About Wilhelm, would you mind taking him home for now? I'll speak with the other children about the importance of kindness and discourage them from excluding anyone," Laura said.

"Alright," Gabriel replied.

"If that's all, I'll take Mason back to his class," Laura said.

"Of course. I appreciate you keeping an eye on Wilhelm," Gabriel added.

"It's what I should do," Laura replied.

Gabriel left the office with Wilhelm, and they parted ways with Laura at the stairwell.

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During the drive home, Wilhelm sat quietly, gazing down with a gloomy pout.

When they finally pulled up to the villa, Wilhelm turned to Gabriel, his eyes red. "Daddy, if I don't apologize, will the other kids really hate me?"

At home, Wilhelm was used to bossing around the service staff and throwing tantrums when things didn't go his way. Despite that, he couldn't ignore the sting of being left out by the other kids at school. Gabriel looked at him, noticing the hurt in his son's eyes.

Unfastening his seatbelt, he leaned over and gently patted Wilhelm's head.

His voice was soft but firm as he explained, "Wil, you can be as playful or demanding as you like at home-Mommy and I will indulge you. But with other kids, you can't act like that, or they'll end up disliking you."

He went on, "Think about it. If there were a kid who lied and said you hit them or stole their things, wouldn't you feel upset and not want to play with them?"

Wilhelm seemed to understand, nodding slowly. "But... Mason took away some of my friends as soon as he came. I hate him! I don't want to apologize to him!"

Gabriel sighed. "Have you thought about why those friends wanted to play with him instead of you?"

"No... I don't know..." Wilhelm mumbled.

"Then start watching to see what he does

him makes the other kids like those friends want to be so

him, and try to do it even better, so

around you

again," Gabriel encouraged.

Wilhelm stared, blinking, before murmuring, "Daddy, I'm not sure I understand..."

"It's okay if you don't fully understand yet. Just follow my advice. First, apologize to show the other kids you're willing to change. Only then will they feel comfortable enough to be friends with you again," Gabriel instructed.

Since Wilhelm always listened to Gabriel, he nodded. "Alright."

"Good. Now go play inside, and I'll pick you up after work to visit Mason's house and apologize properly," Gabriel said.

He dropped Wilhelm off at the villa, leaving him in the care of the housekeeper, and headed back to the office. Thinking about meeting Nyla later, he felt his mood lift.

As he neared the office, Gabriel received a call from Jane.

"Gabriel, I met Mr. Tonra before

Theo, but he wouldn't even consider us as a partner-he's clearly favoring Prospectus Technology. After the humiliation Damon put me through yesterday, I'm not letting him get the Golden Waters Resort project!" Her voice was tight with anger.

Gabriel's expression remained calm, though his tone was reassuring. "As long as Starlite Enterprise hasn't signed with Prospectus Technology, we still have a chance.

"Ideally, we can find out Prospectus Technology's bid through Mr. Tonra. If the Wilkie Group offers more, we'll secure the deal."

"That's exactly my plan. I'm heading back to the office now, but I'll try to catch Mr. Tonra at the golf course this weekend," Jane replied.

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After chatting a bit more, Jane quickly hung up to get back to work.

In the evening....

Shortly after Nyla and Damon returned to the villa, the doorbell rang.

Gabriel arrived with a bunch of gifts, bringing Wilhelm along to apologize.

Since Nyla was already aware of the situation from the afternoon, she had instructed the maid to let them in.

As the maid welcomed them, Nyla was playing with Mason, building blocks scattered around.

"Ms. Kinsey, Mr. Gabriel and Mr. Wilhelm have arrived," the maid announced.

Nyla looked up, instinctively tensing when she made eye contact with Gabriel. His reckless behavior from five years ago was still fresh in her mind. Even after all this time, being near him still sent chills down her spine. She turned to the maid and said, "Call Damon out."

"Sure," the maid replied.

Gabriel set down the gifts and looked at Nyla with warmth in his eyes. "Nyla, it's been a while. I didn't get a chance to greet you at the party. You're not upset with me, are you?"

Nyla's expression remained indifferent. "Mr. Hackett, we haven't had anything to do with each other for a long time. There's no need for pleasantries."

If he and Wilhelm weren't here to apologize to Mason, she wouldn't have let them in at all.

Noticing her coldness, Gabriel shrugged it off and continued. "You've changed a lot over the past five years."

Nyla frowned, about to respond, when she heard footsteps approaching. She turned to see Damon striding toward her and Mason.

She smiled, feeling more at ease. "You're here."

Damon reached her side and noticed her bare feet. He furrowed his brows slightly, then scooped her up and set her on the sofa. "Didn't I tell you to wear slippers?"

Nyla, feeling a bit guilty, avoided his gaze. "The underfloor heating makes it warm. I don't feel cold."

"By the time you feel cold, you'll already have a cold," Damon chided gently.

He picked up a pair of fluffy slippers from beside the sofa and helped her put them on before turning to Gabriel. "Mr. Hackett, I understand you're here to apologize today?"

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Facing Damon's icy stare, Gabriel unclenched his hands and smiled. "Yes, we're aware of the situation regarding Wilhelm's behavior. Both his mother and I feel sorry about him lying, so we brought him here to apologize to Mason."

With that, he patted Wilhelm's back and softly encouraged, "Wil, why don't you go ahead and apologize?"

Wilhelm looked at Mason and offered an earnest apology, just as Gabriel had coached him on the way over. Gabriel was pleasantly surprised by Wilhelm's cooperation. Was the kid having a change of heart today?

Damon hadn't planned on getting into a conflict with a child, so he simply remarked, "Mr. Hackett, your gaming business is booming these days, but you should also pay attention to your child's upbringing. They say if a child isn't taught well, it reflects on the father. It might be better if you spent more time with your family."

Gabriel smiled, though his eyes held no warmth. "You're right, Mr. Sumner. I appreciate the reminder."

"Then, I won't keep you for dinner," Damon said.

"Alright, goodbye, Mr. Sumner," Gabriel replied.

He then turned to Nyla, his voice gentle. "Nyla, it's been so long since we've seen each other. We should have dinner sometime when you're free."

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Before Nyla could respond, Damon interjected coldly, "Mr. Hackett, she probably doesn't have the time."

As he spoke, he stepped in front of Nyla, blocking Gabriel's view.

Gabriel looked directly at him, unperturbed. "Mr. Sumner, Nyla hasn't answered yet, and you're speaking for her. Isn't that a bit domineering?"

The two men held their ground, both roughly the same height, as the atmosphere grew tense between them.

Damon exuded an icy aura, as if he could freeze anyone in place.

Meanwhile, Gabriel maintained a slight smile, seemingly unaffected by the tension.

The living room fell into a heavy silence, each breath audibly punctuating the quiet.

Nyla frowned and spoke coolly. "Gabriel, I heard your mother has remarried. We have nothing to do with each other anymore, and I don't want to have dinner with you." Gabriel's smile faltered, a flicker of disappointment appearing in his eyes.

He lowered his gaze and said softly, "Nyla, I know you still hold a grudge for what happened before. I just want to be like a brother to you now, to make up for the harm I caused." "There's no need," she replied sharply. "If you truly want to make amends, let's pretend we don't know each other when we meet in the future. It's better for both of us." Her tone remained cold, cutting off any remaining hope Gabriel had. He thought she must truly hate him to such an extent that she wanted nothing more to do with him. He forced a bitter smile. "Alright, I understand."

Gabriel took Wilhelm's hand, turned, and left, looking lonely and desolate.

Once they disappeared through the door, Damon turned back to Nyla, warning, "From now on, stay away from Jane and Gabriel."

"Although I couldn't find concrete evidence linking Gabriel to the roses delivered to your door and those harassing texts, I have a strong feeling he's involved."

Upon hearing that, Nyla's expression cooled further, and she nodded. "Okay, I understand."

"Also, don't worry. I'll protect you and Buddy," Damon assured her.

He was serious, emotions swirling in his eyes. He would never let what had happened five years ago happen again.

Seeing his earnest expression, Nyla couldn't help but smile. "Okay, I trust you."

Her gentle almond-shaped eyes sparkled like a galaxy of stars, drawing him in.

Damon's gaze softened as he replied, "Alright, let's get ready for dinner."

Gabriel and Wilhelm got into the car,

both looking grim and tense. The e

temperature inside the car

to drop to near freezing.

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Several minutes passed before Gabriel started the engine.

As he glanced in the rearview mirror, he noticed Wilhelm unusually quiet. Surprised, he turned to ask, "Wil, what's wrong? Are you still upset about apologizing to Mason earlier?"

Wilhelm looked up and shook his head. "Daddy, it's not that. I just think Mason's mom treats him really well."

He wished that Gabriel and Jane would play with him too when they came home from work.

Gabriel was always busy at the

office, and while Jane usually came home early, she often dismissed him impatiently when he brought her toys, asking him not to disturb her rest. After a few attempts, he had stopped asking.

"Why do you think that?" Gabriel asked.

"His mom plays blocks with him, but you and Mommy are always busy and don't have time to play with me," Wilhelm replied.

The car fell silent.

After a long pause, Gabriel finally spoke.

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"Do you want that kind of mom then?" Gabriel asked.

"Of course I want one like that! I wish Mommy could play with me, come to my school events, and cuddle with me at night while I sleep..." Wilhelm went on, not noticing the growing seriousness in Gabriel's gaze. Gabriel finally smiled and started the car, assuring Wilhelm, "Don't worry. I'll make sure you have the kind of mom you dream of."

Wilhelm's eyes lit up, but a hint of disappointment crept into his expression as he murmured, "But... Mommy is really busy and hardly has time for me..."

"She'll have time," Gabriel promised.

"Really?" Wilhelm asked, his tone hopeful.

Gabriel chuckled. "When have I ever lied to you?"

Wilhelm's face brightened with excitement as he looked at Gabriel. "Daddy, when will Mommy have time to play with me then?"

"Soon," Gabriel replied and stared ahead as his grip on the steering wheel tightened. His knuckles turned pale while his gaze darkened.

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Time flew, and soon Saturday arrived.

Damon had asked Spencer to prepare everything for their hike on Friday afternoon, so after breakfast, he set off right away with Nyla and Mason to hike in a nearby city.

Since there were no mountains in the center of Saintornia, they headed to one that stood a few hundred meters high in Tempornia.

After parking at the foot of the mountain, Damon opened the trunk and pulled out two backpacks-one large and one small.

He slung the larger one over his shoulder and handed the smaller one to Mason. "This is your bag, filled with snacks and water. You'll carry it while we hike. If it gets too heavy, I'll help you." Mason put the backpack on right away, looking up at Damon with confidence. "Daddy, I'm a man too. I can handle it!"

Damon couldn't help but smile. "Okay, I believe you."

They had chosen a mountain called

Mount Trifall, which usually had a fair number of local visitors.

However, with the light drizzle today,

they were the only ones there.

en FindNovel

Nyla had never taken Mason hiking before, so he was excited and curious about everything around him.

Watching him hop ahead, Nyla

reminded him to slow down and be

careful. The trails were equipped with handrails to ensure visitor. safety, so she wasn't worried about him falling-just that he might trip.

Damon walked beside Nyla, smiling as he said, "Don't worry too much Buddy is already five. We rarely get time alone with him, so let's enjoy

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hike together."

As he spoke, he took her hand.

His hand was warm and dry, enveloping hers completely.

The warmth radiated from their touch and sent a wave of heat straight to her heart, leaving her feeling tingly all over.

Nyla tried to pull her hand away, but Damon held on tightly.

"Hold on to me so you don't fall later," he teased.

"I won't fall, I" Before Nyla could finish, she stepped on a rock and stumbled sideways.

In an instant, Damon pulled her into his arms, her face colliding with his chest. It was so firm!

Nyla felt a sharp pain in her nose, and tears sprang to her eyes.

Rubbing her sore nose, she huffed. "Is your chest made of bricks? Why is it so hard?"

Damon chuckled. "I have an even harder spot. Want to try?"

Nyla froze, and her hand stopped mid-rub, her face and ears turning a deep shade of red.

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Nyla glared at Damon. "Could you please be a bit more serious?"

Damon feigned innocence and replied, "I was talking about my biceps. What's not serious about that? Or are you the one having lewd thoughts?" Seeing the mischievous glint in Damon's eyes, Nyla realized he was teasing her on purpose.

Just as she was about to respond, Mason's voice called from up ahead, "Daddy, Mommy, come over here! Let's take a picture!"

Nyla took a deep breath, pushed Damon away, and hurried forward without looking back.

Damon watched her stomp off with a fond smile. They quickly caught up with Mason, who was bouncing with excitement in a small gazebo. "Mommy, let's take pictures here!" Mason exclaimed.

Nyla nodded. "Sure."

While they chatted, Damon had already set down his backpack and pulled out his phone. "I'll take the pictures."

He joined Nyla and Mason, standing together for a few shots, then turned to Mason with a grin. "Now, you take a picture of Mommy and Daddy!" "Okay!" Mason agreed happily.

"We don't really need to. We're just here to have fun with Buddy," Nyla said.

Damon looked at her seriously and said, "We've never had a photo together. I want one with you."

Seeing the expectation in his eyes, Nyla couldn't bear to refuse. "Alright."

Damon showed Mason how to take the picture and told him to stand back while he moved closer to Nyla. "Just standing here looks too plain. Let's strike a pose." Before Nyla could respond, Damon wrapped an arm around her waist, turning to Mason. "Okay, Buddy, you can take it now."

Mason gave him an OK sign and counted down, "Alright. 3... 2... 1..."

Just as the shutter clicked, Damon turned and pressed a kiss on Nyla's cheek. The moment was captured perfectly.

Nyla turned to him, eyes wide. "Were you doing that on purpose?"

"Nope, I just suddenly felt like kissing you while taking the picture," Damon answered.

Nyla was rendered speechless.

Damon released her and walked over to Mason, saying, "Let me see the photo."

Mason giggled as he handed the phone to Damon.

Looking at the picture, Damon nodded in satisfaction and praised, "Great shot."

They took a break in the gazebo before continuing their hike.

After climbing for over an hour, they finally reached the halfway point. There was a suspension bridge there, and they took a few group photos before pressing on. The rain began to intensify, so they donned their rain jackets and continued up the mountain.

After another hour of hiking, they finally reached the summit. By then, the rain had stopped, and the mist in the mountains cleared, revealing the peaks in their original glory

Although it was winter, it rarely snowed here. The rolling mountains had shed their autumn colors for a deep, dark coat. Most of the trees had turned yellow, their sparse leaves swaying gently in the breeze.

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Sunlight bathed the mountains, casting a soft golden glow over the landscape. The exposed rocks shimmered under the sun like stoic guardians protecting this tranquil land. The winding paths were

covered in fallen leaves, crunching underfoot like nature's winter

symphony.

Damon unpacked a waterproof mat from his bag and spread it on the ground, setting out food and water in the center before turning to Nyla and Mason. "Come eat something first." Seeing that Damon had prepared mostly their favorite snacks, Nyla bit her lip as a warm feeling swelled in her heart.

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After they finished eating and rested for a bit, they set off to head back down. The descent was much faster than the climb, and they reached the halfway point in less than half an hour. Mason walked quickly and would occasionally run when the path was flat.

Nyla kept an eye on him, reminding him to slow down, but she wasn't watching the stones under her feet. She stepped on one and slipped. "Ah!" she cried out.

A sharp pain shot through her ankle as she stumbled toward the railing.

Damon quickly grabbed her hand to steady her.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

Nyla's face turned pale, and cold sweat beaded on her forehead. "I think I twisted my ankle."

"Hold onto the railing. Let me check it," Damon instructed.

Once she was stable, he crouched down to examine her ankle. Seeing that it was swollen, he frowned. "It's swollen-you probably sprained it."

He stood up, turned his backpack around to the front, and crouched down again. "Get on my back. I'll carry you down," he told Nyla.

"But we still have quite a distance to go..." Nyla hesitated.

"I'm not that weak. Just get on," Damon insisted.

Nyla bit her lip but finally agreed, climbing onto his back and wrapping her arms around his neck.

Damon stood up and began the descent, his broad back providing her with a reassuring sense of security.

Mason, who had been running around earlier, quieted down after Nyla twisted her ankle. He stayed close to Damon as they made their way down.

When they reached the car, Mason looked at Nyla with guilt in his eyes. "Mommy, I'm sorry... It's my fault."

Nyla patted his head, seeing the sadness in his expression. "Buddy, it was just an accident. It's not your fault. But next time, you need to walk slowly when going downhill, or you might twist your ankle like I did-or worse, fall."

Mason nodded. "Okay, I promise I won't do it again."

"Good," Nyla replied approvingly.

Damon took a spray from the medical kit in the car and applied it to Nyla's ankle. "Just hold on for a moment. I'm going to take you to the nearest hospital to get an X-ray just to make sure there are no fractures."

"Is that really necessary? I think it's just a sprain," Nyla said.

"I'd feel better if a doctor checked it out," Damon replied.

Upon seeing the worry in his eyes, Nyla's heart softened. "Okay, I'll listen to you."

Damon started the car and drove to the nearest hospital.

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After the doctor examined Nyla, he confirmed it was only a sprain and prescribed some medication for her to apply over the next few days.

After all the commotion, they finally returned to the villa, close to evening.

Once they parked, Damon carried Nyla straight to her room.

Nyla laughed, a bit helpless. "The doctor said it's just a sprain. I can walk on my own."

"But the doctor also said to avoid walking as much as possible," Damon countered.

His tone was so firm that Nyla couldn't help but comply.

He placed her on the couch, stood up, and said, "I'll run a bath for you. Since your foot's not in the best shape, do you want to use the bathtub?"

"No need. I can stand for a bit," Nyla replied.

Besides, he'd have to carry her in and out if she used the bathtub. The thought of that made her ears turn red.

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"The bathroom is slippery. What if you fall again?" Damon asked.

"I'll be careful," Nyla promised.

Damon shook his head. "No. I'm running the bath. You're using the bathtub today."

As he turned to leave, Nyla quickly grabbed his arm. "Then ask Lydia to help me instead."

Damon glanced back at her, raising an eyebrow. "Lydia is busy making dinner. Besides, I'm your boyfriend. Do you not trust me?"

Nyla felt her cheeks heat up, unable to meet his gaze. It took her a moment to find her voice.

"Men and women are different," was all she managed to say.

"Why are you worried? I've seen all of you," Damon replied.

Nyla was at a loss for words. How could he say something so embarrassing in such a calm tone?!

She glared at him. "Damon, don't push it!"

What she didn't realize was that her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes were wide and wet-unintentionally captivating.

Damon's gaze darkened, like flames igniting in the darkness, ready to burn everything in its path.

Realizing the danger, Nyla instinctively moved back, her back hitting the couch.

Damon leaned in closer, towering over her. "Nyla, are you afraid of what I might do to you?"

Nyla bit her lip and didn't respond, but her wary eyes spoke volumes.

Her once pale lips were now crimson from her bite, looking like a perfectly ripened fruit, tempting one to pluck.

Damon lowered his head, kissing her lips. They tasted just as sweet as he'd imagined.

Nyla's eyes widened as electricity coursed through her, sending waves of warmth throughout her body and loosening her tense body.

Seeing that she wasn't resisting, Damon cradled the back of her neck and deepened the kiss.

Time seemed to stretch.

Just as Nyla felt she might pass out, Damon finally pulled away.

However, he didn't retreat. Instead, he gently kissed her earlobe and spoke in a low, teasing voice. "Nyla, that's my reward for helping you with your bath." Nyla pushed him away and looked up at him. "You wanted to help me. I gave you that opportunity. Shouldn't I be asking you for a reward instead?" Damon chuckled. "Alright, then. You can kiss me back."

Seeing him lean in closer, Nyla quickly covered his mouth with her hand. "Stop it! You have a meeting at 8:00 p.m.!"

Damon's eyes crinkled as he took in her flushed cheeks, but he relented. "Fine."

As he spoke, his lips brushed lightly against Nyla's hand, creating an atmosphere thick with tension.

Nyla quickly withdrew her hand, her face even redder now.

Damon seemed oblivious to her discomfort and stood up, heading toward the bathroom.

Before long, the sound of running water filled the air.

Damon soon reappeared. "Where's your change of clothes? I'll go get them for you."

"Just grab the towel from the leftmost cabinet," Nyla answered.

"Got it," Damon replied.

He opened the leftmost cabinet, where he found the towel right at eye level. The top towel was a pink one with a strawberry bear print, the cute bear beaming up at him

He took the towel, closed the

cabinet, and placed it on the rack in the bathroom. Just then, the bathtub was nearly full. He turned off the faucet and carried Nyla in from the bedroom.

To make it easier for her to wash up, Damon even brought in a chair. After setting her down on it, he leaned over, supported himself on the armrests, and gazed down at her.

"Are you sure you don't need my help?" he asked.