

Trading My Ex for His Uncle (Nyla)

Chapter 841

Damon's voice was deep, carrying a seductive quality that made it hard to ignore.

Nyla's eyelashes fluttered as she looked up at him. She broke into a radiant smile and replied, "No need, you can go now."

Her smile was so dazzling that it momentarily left Damon in a daze.

After a pause, he replied with a hint of disappointment, "Alright then."

"Just go already. If you stay here any longer, the water in the bathtub will get cold," Nyla urged.

Damon raised an eyebrow. "Are you sure you don't want me to stay and help you?"

"I really don't need it," Nyla insisted.

If he stayed, how could she bathe properly?

"Fine." Damon sighed and straightened up, his disappointment evident as he turned and left.

Only after he disappeared from the bathroom doorway did Nyla finally breathe a sigh of relief. She began removing her clothes, careful not to put too much pressure on her injured foot. Limiting her steps, she carefully made her way to the edge of the bathtub. However, once she reached the side, she realized that balancing on one foot made it impossible to step into the tub. The surface was slippery, and she could easily fall if she wasn't careful.

She bit her lip, debating whether or not to call Damon back for help.

They had already spent quite some time in the bedroom, and the night had fully fallen.

After a brief moment of indecision, Nyla wrapped herself in a bath towel and called out to him, "Damon, can you... come in and help me?"

Footsteps quickly approached, and the bathroom door swung open.

Damon stepped inside, his tall frame making the already small bathroom feel even more cramped. The air around them seemed to thicken.

When he saw Nyla wrapped in the towel, her delicate legs exposed and glowing, his gaze darkened. His body tensed, and he swallowed hard, maintaining a calm expression as he approached her.

Beneath that calmness, however, a storm brewed.

"What's wrong? What do you need help with?" he asked.

Nyla looked up, instinctively biting her lip as their eyes met.

"Um... could you please carry me into the bathtub? I can't get in with just one foot to support me..." she asked.

"Sure," Damon replied, his voice slightly husky.

He walked up to her and effortlessly lifted Nyla.

As their skin made contact, Nyla could feel the tautness of his muscles, the strength of his body. She swallowed nervously, her heart racing and silently prayed he would quickly set her down in the bathtub and leave.

Though it felt like an eternity, it was only moments before he lowered her into the water.

The moment Nyla's skin touched the water, she let out a tiny sigh of relief. "Thank you, you can "

Before she could finish her

sentence her lips were captured in a kiss. Her eyes widened in shock, but she could also see the raw possessiveness in Damon's gaze.

It was a look that suggested he wanted to devour her whole.

Nyla gripped the edge of the bathtub, her heart pounding in her chest.

The kiss was fierce and urgent, like a sudden summer downpour that swept her away, leaving no chance for escape.

Just when she thought she might pass out from lack of air, Damon finally released her, his voice hoarse. "Nyla, you let the wolf into the house."

Nyla collapsed against his chest,

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gasping for breath. She shot him a glare. He was the one taking advantage of her, and now he was turning the tables on her.

Once she regained her breath, she pushed him away. "I need to wash now, you can go."

Damon chuckled, holding out the soaked cuff of his shirt in front of her. "You got this wet. You need to take responsibility."

Chapter 842

Nyla just wanted Damon to leave, so she replied with a frown, "I'll pay you back for it."

"No way, this shirt means a lot to me," Damon said.

Nyla ground her teeth in frustration. If it meant so much to him, why hadn't he treated it better?

"What exactly do you want?" she asked.

She glared at him, but given that she was sitting in the bathtub with her body partially exposed, it was more alluring than threatening.

Damon's gaze deepened, and he grasped her hand before leaning in to kiss her again.

Just before their lips touched, his low, gravelly voice whispered in her ear, "I want you."

Nyla clenched the edge of the bathtub tightly, her body instinctively tensing.

In a moment of distraction, one of them accidentally hit the shower switch. Steam quickly filled the bathroom, drowning out all sound.

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The bath lasted for over two hours.

When Damon finally stepped out of the bathroom, holding a flushed Nyla, he wore a satisfied smile. He set her down on the bed and went to grab a towel to dry her hair.

Nyla was too exhausted to move, so she leaned against him, allowing him to do as he pleased.

After drying her hair halfway, Damon brushed it and then turned on the hairdryer.

Nyla rested her head on Damon's lap, absentmindedly tracing patterns on his knee with her fingers.

As she felt his fingers threading through her hair, her mind involuntarily drifted back to the earlier scene in the bathroom, causing her cheeks to heat up again. Just as she tried to think of something else to distract herself, she suddenly felt a shift in Damon's body.

She shot up and glared at him. "You beast!"

Damon merely stared at her before replying, "Don't worry. I promise not to touch you anymore tonight, and I will keep that promise."

Seeing his seriousness, Nyla hesitated but eventually believed him. She didn't want him to keep drying her hair, so she snatched the hairdryer from his hands. "Have someone bring you a set of clothes. Get dressed, then go downstairs," she ordered.

Damon swallowed and said, "Okay."

By the time Nyla finished drying her hair, Damon had already changed into his clothes.

"Do you need help getting dressed?" he asked.

"No, you go ahead," she answered.

Damon nodded and pulled the door open to leave.

Once the door closed behind him, Nyla pulled the covers back and got out of bed.

The moment her foot hit the floor, her legs gave way. She nearly fell, barely managing to catch herself on the bed.

After a moment to recover, she slowly headed to the wardrobe.

By the time she changed and made it downstairs, several minutes had passed. Due to her injured foot

awkward walking weed.

As soon as she entered the room, Mason put down his toy and rushed over to her, looking a bit guilty. "Mommy, let me help you to the dining room."

Mason's sweet and considerate demeanor made Nyla smile. "Thank you, Buddy."

With Mason's support, she headed to the dining table and sat down.

Damon sat across from her, noticing her furrowed brows. "Does it still hurt?"

Nyla looked up, unsure what he was referring to. "No..."

"If it still hurts, just tell me, and I'll get you some medicine," Damon said.

Nyla's face flushed, and she couldn't help but glare at him.

Mason looked confused. "Daddy, didn't the doctor give Mommy medicine when we went to the

hospital earlier? Why do we

buy more?"

Damon cleared his throat. "Buddy, when adults are talking, you shouldn't interrupt. Now, let's eat."

"Oh..." Mason still couldn't understand why they needed more medicine for his mom.

Chapter 843

Mason quickly pushed his confusion aside when he saw his favorite barbecue ribs and focused on eating.

After finishing dinner, Nyla was just about to head back to her bedroom when Damon walked up to her and effortlessly picked her up. Seeing Lydia cover her mouth and chuckle, Nyla felt her cheeks flush. She quickly whispered in Damon's ear, "I can walk on my own."

"You walk too slowly. I'm carrying you," Damon insisted.

Nyla couldn't argue with him, so she went along with it.

Instead of taking Nyla to the bedroom, Damon carried her to his study.

"Aren't you supposed to be in a meeting soon? Why are you taking me to your study?" she asked.

"You can rest on the sofa in my study and read. I'll take you upstairs after the meeting," he replied.

Nyla frowned. "Will it disturb your meeting?"

Damon smiled. "No."

Their relationship had finally made substantial progress that day, and with Nyla's foot injured, Damon wanted to seize the opportunity to move into her room. He wasn't sure when he'd have another chance. Despite his calculated plan, he maintained a calm exterior.

Nyla, eager to spend more time with Damon, nodded. "Okay, then."

After settling Nyla on the sofa, Damon found her a book and covered her with a thin blanket.

"I'll go to my meeting now. If you feel tired later, just sleep here for a bit," he said softly.

"Okay," she replied.

Once Damon returned to his desk, he turned on his laptop and gathered the shareholders to begin the meeting.

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It lasted over three hours before wrapping up. He instructed Spencer to organize the minutes and email them to him, then closed the laptop.

Rising from his desk, he walked over

to the sofa and saw that Nyla had already fallen asleep, holding the book loosely in her hands as if it might slip to the floor at any moment.

Gently, Damon took the book from her hands and placed it on the table, gazing lovingly at her peaceful face.

Though Nyla hadn't been asleep for long, she didn't sleep deeply. Feeling a shadow fall over her, she slowly opened her eyes.

"Did you finish your meeting?" she asked, her voice hoarse and laced with sleepiness, completely unaware of how cute she looked. Damon nodded. "Yeah, I'll carry you upstairs to sleep."

"Okay," Nyla replied.

When Damon carried her back to the bedroom and didn't leave, she finally sensed something was off. "Why haven't you left yet?"

Damon pulled back the covers and

naturally lay on the other side of her bed. "You hurt your foot. It'll be inconvenient for you to go to the Conner bathroom at night, so I'm staying to take care of you."

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"I'll be fine. Just hurry back to your own room," Nyla insisted.

"Nope. You needed my help earlier when you were taking a bath. Even if you don't need my help, what if you fall at night and no one's around to notice?" Damon asked. No matter how much Nyla protested, Damon refused to leave.

After exhausting her arguments, he handed her a glass of water. "Drink this and get ready for bed."

Nyla didn't take it, glaring at him. "You have to sleep here, is that it?"

Damon nodded.

"Fine, then you sleep here, and I'll go sleep with Buddy," Nyla said.

Just as she pulled back the covers and prepared to get out of bed, Damon grabbed her wrist and pulled her back. His tall figure loomed over her as he suggested, "Nyla, if you really can't sleep, why don't we do something interesting?"

Chapter 844

Seeing Damon's lips slowly approaching, Nyla quickly pushed against his chest. "I can sleep... I can sleep..."

"Then are you still going to Buddy?" Damon asked.

Nyla remained silent for a moment before she relented. "No..."

"Okay, then let's sleep," Damon replied, releasing her and settling back into his original position.

As Damon moved away, the fresh scent of pine on him gradually faded.

Nyla clutched the blanket, a sudden and unexpected sense of loss sweeping over her. She wasn't actually hoping for something, was she? "Why aren't you covering yourself? Do you want me to help you?" Damon's deep voice broke through her thoughts.

"No, thanks," Nyla answered.

She pulled the blanket up to her collarbone and closed her eyes, trying to drift off to sleep.

Since Mason turned three, he had refused to sleep with her and insisted on sleeping in his own room.

For the past two years, Nyla had slept alone, so suddenly having someone else in her space felt strange.

Nyla thought she would have trouble falling asleep, but surprisingly, she drifted off shortly after.

Damon turned to look when he heard her even breathing beside him. The room was pitch black, and he could only vaguely make out her face.

The person he had missed for over five years was finally asleep beside him, and he found it hard to put his emotions into words.

It felt like suddenly finding a long-lost treasure, one that brought joy but also a sense of unreality.

Damon quietly watched Nyla for a long time, long enough that his eyes grew sore before he finally looked away and gently held her hand under the blanket.

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Although it was late, the lights in the Wilkies' study were still on.

Jane and Gabriel sat on the sofa, both wearing serious expressions.

"Gabriel, Mr. Tonra said he could give us a chance, but the Wilkie Group has to invest half a billion dollars to participate in the Golden Waters Resort project," Jane said.

That amount was a little too much for the Wilkie Group.

Jane knew that the liquid funds they had available were only about 650,000,000 dollars. If they invested half a billion dollars in the resort, they wouldn't see a return until it was completed and opened.

If it were 250,000,000 dollars, she might be able to negotiate with Pedro, but half a billion dollars... he would definitely not agree.

After all, if something went wrong with the Wilkie Group, they couldn't quickly withdraw funds from the project, putting them at risk of bankruptcy.

Gabriel remained silent for a moment before speaking softly. "Jane, I can't make this decision for you, but if I were you, I wouldn't easily give up this opportunity after all the effort I've put in."

Hearing this, Jane frowned, recalling

how she had humbled herself to Shane Tonra at the golf course earlier that day. He had only given her a chance to negotiate because he knew she was with the Wilkie Group. She couldn't help but grit her teeth.

When she spoke to Shane, several other people from different companies had been around. The companies were all competing at a similar level to the Wilkie Group, making it a tough competition.

In the end, Shane had said that if the

Wilkie Group was genuinely interested, Pedro should come with the money to talk to him. Someone with no authority to make decisions, like her, shouldn't be sent to waste his time.

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Gabriel continued when Jane seemed persuaded. "Anyway, it's impossible to bid with Prospectus Technology now. So, you'll have to tell Grandpa about it sooner or later. Why not tell him now, and then mention the Golden Waters Resort project? Let him decide whether to invest the money."

Chapter 845

"But if I do that, the company shares he promised me..." Jane trailed off.

"Jane, you can't have it all. It's already a blessing in disguise that Grandpa hasn't completely lost faith in you. You'll have other chances for the shares in the future," Gabriel advised.

Jane was upset, but she knew Gabriel was right. She reluctantly nodded and said, "Alright, I'll go talk to Grandpa."

A little over ten minutes later, Pedro's voice boomed through the study of the Wilkie mansion. His expression was grim. "How did you raise your son?! Wilhelm actually dared to tell such a lie! And you approached Damon for negotiations without verifying the facts? You've completely embarrassed the Wilkies!"

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Jane kept her eyes down, displeasure flickering in them, but she didn't dare retort.

Once Pedro finished his tirade, Jane cautiously looked up and said, "Grandpa, it seems the collaboration with Prospectus Technology is definitely off.

"I met with Mr. Shane Tonra from Starlite Enterprise today, and he agreed to let the Wilkie Group participate in the Golden Waters Resort project. The initial investment might be quite high, though..."

At the mention of "Golden Waters Resort", a hint of surprise crossed Pedro's face. He was familiar with the project. Several companies had previously sought to collaborate with Starlite Enterprise but had been turned down. "Are you sure Starlite Enterprise is willing to let the Wilkie Group join?" he asked.

Jane nodded. "I'm sure. Starlite Enterprise is open to other companies because they've been facing cash flow issues and won't be able to handle the project alone. That's why they're willing to allow others to join." As she spoke, she observed Pedro's expression.

Realizing he was receptive, she continued. "When I spoke to Mr. Tonra, Mr. Calnan from Start Vic and Mr. Ludlam from the Ludlam Group were also present. They want in on this project as well."

Pedro frowned and asked, "How much capital is needed to join this project?"

"Half a billion dollars," Jane answered.

"What?!" Pedro's eyes widened in shock. He flatly refused, "No way! This project won't yield any profits in the short term. If we invest this much capital, the Wilkie Group may face bankruptcy if anything goes wrong later."

If he were younger, he would have jumped at such a great opportunity, willing to risk everything. Now that he was older, he lacked that same fighting spirit. If the Wilkie Group went bankrupt now, he wouldn't have the energy or courage to start over.

Seeing his refusal, Jane grew anxious and pleaded, "Grandpa, this opportunity is hard to come by. Once the resort is built, it will start generating profits, and we'll get our money back gradually."

Pedro rejected her argument. "You don't need to say anything more. I won't agree. Just go home."

Jane was frustrated, but she knew that most of the Wilkie Group's shares were in Pedro's hands. If he didn't agree, nothing would happen.

She sighed. "Grandpa, I hope you can reconsider. I'm meeting with Mr. Tonra tomorrow. If you change your mind, let me know—"

Pedro coldly interrupted, "Jane, I know you're eager to make a name for yourself, but business is like war. If you rush in too hastily, you'll only make mistakes." "Yes, Grandpa, I understand," Jane replied.

Realizing she wasn't truly listening, Pedro waved her away. After she left, he moved to the window and gazed grimly at the dark night.

Chapter 846

Pedro was getting old, but none of his children or grandchildren seemed ready to take over. If things continued like this, the Wilkie Group would soon need to change its name. At that thought, a wave of sorrow washed over him.

Among his grandchildren, Jane stood out as one of the more capable, but she still lacked the skills to manage the Wilkie Group.

Gabriel was competent enough to turn around a gaming company that had been losing money for years, which proved he had some skill. However, he was still not a Wilkie, and Pedro didn't fully trust him. It seemed Pedro would have to find a way to train Theo. If Theo didn't work out, he would have to hand the company over to Jane in the future.

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Unaware of Pedro's thoughts, Jane returned to her villa, looking dejected.

"Jane, why do you look so upset? Did Grandpa disagree?" Gabriel asked.

Jane weakly nodded. "Yeah, he thinks half a billion dollars is too much."

Before meeting with Pedro, she had already suspected the outcome. She had just thought it was worth trying after putting in so much effort.

Gabriel pulled her into a loving embrace and comforted her. "Don't be upset. There will definitely be better projects in the future."

"But... I don't feel like giving up just like that..." Jane mumbled.

Gabriel patted her back, whispering reassuringly, "Right now, the shares are in Grandpa's hands, so we have to listen to him. If there's any news from Starlite Enterprise in the future, I'll let you know." Suddenly, Jane had an idea. She pulled back from Gabriel's embrace and looked up at him. "Gabriel, your gaming company should be able to free up quite a bit of money, right?"

Gabriel frowned, looking troubled. "I could probably free up some hundreds of millions, but that money belongs to the company, not us. I wouldn't agree to take it out." Jane's expression hardened due to his refusal. "If you don't want to, then forget it. I was just asking."

There was a flicker in Gabriel's eyes before he nodded. "You've had a long day. You must be tired. Let me draw you a bath so you can wash and rest well for tomorrow." Jane nodded. "Okay."

After Gabriel left, Jane lowered her gaze, a glint in her eyes as she pondered something.

The next morning, Nyla opened her eyes to see a handsome face looming close. She blinked in surprise before recalling that Damon had slept in her room the night before.

She stared at his face, and as she did, she smiled involuntarily. Just as she was about to reach out to touch his thick eyebrows, he suddenly opened his eyes.

Nyla froze, her hand stopping just a few centimeters from his brow. Realizing what she was doing, she quickly pulled her hand back. "Good... morning..." she murmured.

Damon smirked, his voice laced with amusement. "Nyla, were you trying to touch my face just now?"

Nyla feigned calmness. "No, I just saw a hair on your face and wanted to help you brush it off."

"Is that so?" Damon asked.

Meeting his teasing gaze, Nyla quickly averted her eyes and answered, "Yes, and it's getting late. We should get up."

As soon as she finished speaking, he grabbed her hand. Before she knew it, he placed her hand against his face.

"Feel free to touch," Damon offered.

Nyla was about to pull her hand back when a knock sounded at the door. A maid informed her, "Ms. Kinsey, Ms. Weir is here." Nyla was surprised. Why would Valarie come to see her so early?

She replied, "Okay, I understand. Tell her to wait for me downstairs for ten minutes."

After the maid left, Nyla turned back to find Damon still holding her hand, and her face involuntarily flushed. She asked, "Let go quickly, I need to get up."

Chapter 847

"Give me a kiss, and I'll let go," Damon requested.

Nyla glared at him. "Damon, can you stop being so childish?"

"I just want a good morning kiss. If you don't give it to me, I won't let go," he insisted.

At that moment, Nyla saw a reflection of Mason in Damon. Before Mason turned three, he had to have a kiss on his face every morning, or he would throw a tantrum. Just like father, like son.

Thinking about how Valarie was waiting for her downstairs, Nyla leaned over and quickly pecked Damon on the cheek before pulling back.

"Can you let go of me now?" she asked, her tone calm, though the slight blush on her ears betrayed her.

Damon didn't tease her further and released her hand.

As Nyla sat up and swung her legs over the side of the bed, Damon's strong hands steadied her.

"I'll help you wash up," he said.

With his assistance, she moved much more quickly, so she didn't refuse.

Once they entered the bathroom, Nyla noticed a black toothbrush and cup beside her own. Everything else had also been doubled.

She pointed at the toothbrush and cup. "What's this about?"

Damon rubbed his nose. "If I said it's to make it easier to take care of you, would you believe me?"

"Do you think I would?" Nyla replied.

"Okay, fine. I just want to hold your hand every night before bed and wake up to you every morning," Damon confessed.

Seeing the sincerity in his eyes stirred something unexplainable in Nyla, and she didn't know how to respond. She turned her gaze away, her voice soft. "I'll go wash up first."

Noticing her calmness, Damon let out a small sigh of relief. As long as she wasn't upset, that was good enough.

After they finished washing up, Nyla

didn't react when she saw half of Damon's clothes in the closet. In fact, while washing up, she had already accepted the idea of them sharing a room. en FindNovel

After all, they were a couple now, and living together was perfectly normal.

With Mason in the picture, they would be together for life if nothing unexpected happened, so living together was just a matter of time.

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Once they changed clothes, Damon insisted on carrying Nyla downstairs.

Valarie was sitting on the sofa in the living room, sipping coffee.

When she saw Damon carrying Nyla down, she almost spat out her drink. She quickly set down her cup and looked at the two of them with a curious expression. Could it be that they had such an intense night last night that Nyla could barely walk?

Damon placed Nyla on the sofa opposite Valarie and greeted her before heading to the study, leaving the living room to the two of them.

As soon as he left, Valarie teased, "Looks like Damon's been holding back for years. I can't believe you still managed to get up so early today."

Upon realizing what she was implying, Nyla's face turned red. She quickly explained, "I twisted my ankle, and it's hard for me to walk, so he had to carry me." Valarie eyed her skeptically. "If it's just a twisted ankle, why are you blushing?"

Nyla was speechless.

Clearing her throat, she asked, "What brings you here so early?"

"I wanted to invite you shopping, but since you've twisted your ankle, what's the point? By the way, how did you twist your ankle? It wasn't because you and Damon..." Valarie trailed off suggestively.

"No!" Nyla interrupted, afraid Valarie would say something scandalous. She hadn't expected her to have such a vivid imagination. "I twisted it while hiking yesterday."

Chapter 848

"Hiking? What made you decide to do that?" Valarie asked.

"Buddy wanted to go. Anyway, how are you planning to deal with Zayn?" Nyla replied.

The mention of Zayn made Valarie frown, disgust flickering in her eyes.

"The Updikes want to settle privately, but I've already reported it to the police. Whatever the judge decides, I'm going through with it. I won't settle privately," she answered.

Just thinking about Zayn's disgusting behavior made Valarie feel sick. She couldn't believe she had agreed to marry him in the first place.

"Yeah, I support you. Make sure Zayn gets the punishment he deserves," Nyla said.

Valarie nodded, just as her phone rang. Seeing it was Brandon, she said before answering, "I'll take this call outside."

"Sure," Nyla said.

Stepping out of the villa, Valarie picked up the phone. "What's up? Why are you calling me out of the blue?"

"Where are you now?" Brandon asked.

"I came over this morning to find Nyla. Why do you ask?" Valarie replied.

There was a moment of silence on the other end, then Brandon's voice came through faintly. "I'm outside your house." "What are you doing at my house this early?" Valarie asked.

"I brought you breakfast. Didn't you say last night that you wanted sandwiches from Patrick's Shack?" Brandon replied. Valarie hadn't expected him to actually remember her offhand comment. "I just mentioned it because I happened to see it."

"But I've already bought the breakfast, and I don't really like sandwiches," Brandon said.

Was it just Valarie's imagination, or did she detect a hint of grievance in his tone?

She bit her lip and hesitated before tentatively suggesting, "How about I come back now?"

"Okay, I'll wait for you at your house," Brandon agreed.

After hanging up, Valarie turned and walked back into the villa. She told Nyla, "Brandon is waiting for me at my house, so I'm heading back." Nyla looked up at her. "You're leaving so soon?"

"Yeah. You take care, and once your ankle's better, we can go shopping together," Valarie said.

"Okay," Nyla replied.

Exiting the villa, Valarie got in her car and drove away.

Brandon had been working overtime these past few days, so besides chatting and calling each other, they hadn't had a chance to meet. Thus, Valarie was eager to see him

Just as she was nearing home, her phone rang again from the passenger seat. While waiting at a red light, she picked it up.

Seeing it was her high school class president, she was taken aback.

"Long time no see! What's up? Why did you suddenly call me?" she asked.

A rough male voice came through. "I'm in Saintornia on a business trip for the next few days. Some classmate's who work here want to get together for dinner. I was wondering if you'd like to join?"

Valarie smiled. "Sure! When are you planning to meet?"

"Tonight at 8:00 p.m., in Room 1 on the third floor of Jeff's," her class president answered.

"Sounds good. I'll be there on time," Valarie promised.

"Great! See you then," the class president replied.

After hanging up, the light turned green.

Valarie pressed the gas, turning into the gate of the villa community at the next intersection.

Brandon was leaning against his car at the Weir residence's entrance, looking down at his phone. His

profile was gentle and ne

radiating a warm aura.

Valarie had to admit that Brandon perfectly matched her aesthetic. Even his personality was her favorite type.

Pulling up beside him, she opened the car door and walked over.

The moment Brandon heard the sound of the car, he looked up in her direction, his gaze warm as he watched her approach.

Under his straightforward gaze, Valarie quickened her pace, reaching out to him. "Where's my breakfast?"

Chapter 849

Brandon chuckled. "So you came back just for breakfast?"

"Of course! It's Patrick's sandwiches. They're really hard to get," Valarie replied.

"Your boyfriend got up at five this morning to stand in line for them, and you're not feeling a bit bad for him?" Brandon teased, his eyes sparkling with amusement and affection as he looked at her. "First, I'll eat breakfast. Then I'll feel bad for you," Valarie answered.

Brandon leaned in closer, his voice dropping to a low murmur. "So how do you plan to compensate me?"

The distance between them suddenly narrowed, close enough for him to catch the faint scent of gardenias on Valarie. It was intoxicating, making him want to get just a little closer...

Valarie found herself mesmerized, unable to move an inch as she stared into Brandon's handsome face. Her hands gripped the hem of her shirt, her heart racing faster.

Just as their lips were about to touch, an unexpected coughing fit interrupted them from behind Brandon.

Valarie snapped back to reality and stepped back hurriedly, her face turning as red as a tomato.

Brandon turned to see Jonathan and greeted him calmly, his expression betraying none of the awkwardness. "Good morning, Mr. Weir."

Jonathan gave a huff but seemed disinclined to engage, bypassing Brandon and getting into his car.

Valarie shrank back, not daring to look in her father's direction.

Once Jonathan's car disappeared from view, she sighed in relief and looked up at Brandon. "Can you be more careful in the future? My dad is definitely going to think even less of you now." Brandon smiled. "Okay, I promise I'll behave next time I come to see you."

Valarie rolled her eyes, clearly unconvinced.

Brandon grabbed the sandwiches from his car and handed them to Valarie. "I need to run to the office for a bit. You can go in now."

Valarie accepted the bag, furrowing her brows. "It's Sunday! You still have to work?"

Brandon nodded. "Yeah, the project collaboration isn't finalized yet. Looks like I'll be busy for a while."

Seeing the dark circles under his eyes made her heart ache. "So you got up so early to buy me breakfast and waited here for so long?"

"I had time to get you breakfast, and besides, you're my girlfriend. I'd wait as long as it takes," Brandon replied.

"Well, since you've been so nice to me, I guess I'll reward you," Valarie said.

Brandon raised an eyebrow. "What kind of reward?"

"Just lower your head," Valarie requested.

He bent down, looking at her expectantly.

Valarie stood on her tiptoes, quickly kissing his cheek before stepping back.

"What do you think? Was that reward good enough?" she bragged.

Brandon gazed at her with smiling eyes and asked, "If I say it wasn't enough, will you give me another one?"

"Definitely not! You should hurry to

the office Focus on your work. If have time during noon, I'll go have offered.

lunch with you," Vala

Brandon asked, "Really?"

"Yeap," Valarie confirmed.

"Then I'll wait for you at the office," Brandon replied.

After he left, Valarie entered her home with a smile, still holding the bag of food.

Approaching noon, she was about to head to the Sumner Group when Jonathan called and asked her to deliver a document to the Weir Group.

The Weir Group and Sumner Group weren't far apart, so Valarie texted Brandon to let him know she'd be about ten minutes late. She grabbed the file and drove out.

Just as Valarie reached Jonathan's office door, it swung open, and she collided with someone coming out.

She staggered back several steps, almost losing her balance, and dropped the file in her hands.

Chapter 850

A hand picked up the file and handed it to Valarie as its owner apologized, "Sorry, I didn't mean to bump into you."

Hearing the voice, Valarie snapped her head up in shock.

It was Tom! Wasn't he abroad?!

"What are you doing here?!" she demanded.

Her eyes betrayed her disbelief-there was no joy in them.

Tom felt a pang in his heart, suppressing his disappointment.

"I came to discuss business with Mr. Weir," he replied.

Valarie's expression remained cold as she took the document from him, walking past him into the office without a second glance.

As the door closed behind her, Tom felt a wave of sorrow. He had been too confident, believing that Valarie would never leave him. Now, he realized how foolish he had been.

Inside the office, Valarie tossed the file onto Jonathan's desk and snapped, "Dad, why are you suddenly collaborating with Tom?"

After the way Valarie and Tom had ended things, the Weirs and Genges hadn't worked together for years.

Jonathan picked up the file, his face calm. "He came to give me money. Why not take it?"

Valarie was speechless.

"Alright, I don't need anything else here. You can head back now," Jonathan dismissed her.

Remembering she was supposed to have lunch with Brandon, Valarie hesitated but ultimately turned to leave.

It wasn't until the office door closed behind her that Jonathan breathed a sigh of relief. If Valarie had caused a scene, he wouldn't have known how to handle it.

As soon as Valarie stepped out of the office, she spotted Tom standing not far away.

He was tall and handsome in his black suit, a striking figure who drew the attention of many.

When he saw her, his previously calm eyes lit up with emotion as he approached. "Valarie " Valarie frowned, cutting him off, "Mr. Genge, we're not familiar. You can address me as Ms. Weir." The coldness in her eyes pierced Tom's heart, leaving him raw and wounded.

His face paled as he said, "I'm sorry for what happened five years ago... Being abroad all this time without you made me realize that the most important person in my heart-

"Mr. Genge, my boyfriend is waiting for me for lunch. I don't have time to

listen to these useless words

you please move aside?" Valarie interrupted.

She smiled, but her eyes remained calm and devoid of any lingering affection.

"You... have a boyfriend now?" Tom's voice softened with sadness, his eyes like fragile crystals on the verge of shattering. Valarie smiled and nodded. "Yes, Mr. Genge. Can you please move?"

She had no desire to be connected to Tom anymore. The thought of him flirting with other women back then made her feel sick.

Tom searched her face for any signs

of deceit but found none. Her expression was steady, and there was no emotion in her eyes she had truly moved on.

He sighed. "I guess I'm too late... right?"

Valarie frowned, unwilling to waste any more time. She pushed past him toward the elevator.

His tall frame stumbled backward, almost losing his balance despite her gentle shove.

His secretary quickly steadied him, asking, "Mr. Genge, are you okay?"

Tom remained silent, his gaze fixated on the direction Valarie had vanished, lost in thought for a long while.

The Weir Group's secretaries exchanged shocked glances, their eyes gleaming with gossip.

Chapter 851

Word quickly spread about how coldly Valarie had treated Tom in public.

As soon as Valarie entered the Sumner Group, she sensed the strange stares from those around her.

At first, she thought it was just her imagination. However, when she bumped into a manager she had previously met during a partnership discussion, and the manager hesitated, she could no longer ignore it. "Ms. Maddock, is something going on? Why do the employees here keep looking at me strangely today?" she asked.

The manager paused for a moment before speaking quietly. "Ms. Weir, I heard that you had an unpleasant encounter with Mr. Genge at the Weir Group today."

Valarie's breakup with Tom five years ago had been highly publicized. Since many of the Sumner Group's employees had been with the company for years, they were

familiar with her history with him. After all, it had made headlines when Valarie caught Tom cheating, and he had been vilified for it.

Following that incident, Tom disappeared abroad for five years, so it wasn't surprising that news spread about their encounter at the Weir Group.

"How did you find out?" Valarie asked, frowning. It had only taken her about ten minutes to get from the Weir Group to the Sumner Group. Could the news have spread so quickly?

"Ms. Weir, it's been circulating around. Mr. Sumner probably knows about it, too," the manager replied sympathetically.

Valarie felt a headache coming on. Knowing Brandon's personality, he would definitely be jealous.

She recalled an incident from when he was still pursuing her. She had gone to dinner with a business partner to discuss a collaboration that ran late into the night.

After seeing the business partner off at the restaurant, she hadn't had time to call a cab before Brandon had yanked her into his car, demanding to know why she had been smiling so much at the business partner.

That was a long time ago, and she couldn't remember exactly what she had said to defend herself, only that they had ended up arguing.

If Brandon could get jealous over a

business partner she had only met a few times, how would he react to her running into her ex-boyfriend

now?

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As expected, when Valarie entered Brandon's office, the air felt icy. It sent shivers down her spine.

Brandon sat behind his desk, looking over some documents without glancing up at her, clearly upset.

"Mr. Sumner, you're working so hard. Don't you plan to have lunch?" Valarie said with a smile as she approached.

Brandon glanced at her, snorted, and

replied coldly, "I've had my fill of jealousy. What else do I need lunch?"

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Valarie couldn't help but chuckle. "Since you're full, I'll just go eat on my own then."

With that, she turned and headed for the door.

"Stop!" Brandon's deep voice commanded from behind her.

Ignoring him, she continued walking.

Just as she reached the door, he grabbed her wrist and said, "Valarie, I know I was wrong."

Valarie turned to face him, seeing his pitiful gaze.

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Although she still felt some annoyance, her anger began to dissipate. Despite this, she wasn't about to let him off easily, so she kept a straight face.

Brandon quickly apologized, "Valarie, I shouldn't have jumped to conclusions. I'm sorry..."

Chapter 852

Valarie's expression softened upon seeing his sincere demeanor. "Brandon, since I agreed to be with you, it means I'm not going to get involved with other men. My meeting with Tom today was just a coincidence. You can't get jealous without reason. Do you think that's

fair?"

"No, I promise I won't do this again!" Brandon said, shaking his head vigorously.

Valarie felt her last bit of annoyance fade at his earnestness.

"Think about it. If I got jealous every time you talked to another woman, wouldn't you find that unreasonable?" she asked.

"No, I'd be happy if you did that. It would show you care about me," Brandon answered.

Valarie was rendered speechless.

Noticing her frustration, Brandon quickly changed the subject. "By the way, the cafeteria at the Sumner Group is pretty good. You didn't get a chance to try it when you were here for meetings before. Would you like to check it out with me today?" "Sure," she replied.

He took her hand, leading her out.

...

In the back seat of a black Cayenne parked by the Sumner Group building, Tom furrowed his brows as he looked over some documents. His fingertips turned white from pinching the papers tightly, and a chilling aura surrounded him.

The file in his hand contained Valarie's information, primarily detailing her experiences over the past five years.

When he saw the section about Zayn drugging Valarie, his eyes narrowed, and he slowly smirked.

His secretary felt a chill run down his spine at Tom's expression. Tom rarely showed such an expression without intending to take action against someone.

Tom closed the file and said coolly, "I want the Updike Group out of the Saintornia market within three days."

The secretary bowed his head and replied cautiously, "Understood."

The car fell into silence.

After a moment, the secretary hesitantly reminded him, "Mr. Genge, our main purpose for returning is to find Nyla and obtain her-"

Before he could finish, Tom

interrupted with a poker face,

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"What's the rush? Don't worry.

won't forget what needs to be done.

Just follow my orders."

A palpable pressure filled the car, making it hard for the secretary to breathe. He quickly bowed his head lower and fell silent.

Tom tapped idly on the armrest of his seat, his eyes half-closed as if lost in thought.

News of Tom's return soon reached Nyla. When the maid brought her the invitation, she was playing with Mason.

"Ms. Kinsey, this is an invitation

Jeline

the Genges, inviting you and Mr. Sumner to attend Mr. Genge's welcome dinner tomorrow night," the maid informed.

Nyla paused and raised an eyebrow. "Which Mr. Genge?"

She didn't recall knowing anyone with the last name Genge, but the invitation clearly stated it was for her and Damon.

"Mr. Tom Genge, the eldest son of the Genges," the maid supplied.

Nyla took the invitation and confirmed it was indeed Tom upon opening it. She felt somewhat surprised.

When Valarie had been with Tom, she had shared a few meals with them.

Nyla had assumed he would end up with Valarie for good, but instead, he had chosen to pursue a childhood sweetheart and let Valarie go. What a scumbag.

"Okay, I got it," Nyla replied.

After the maid left, Nyla went to the study with the invitation.

Knowing it was from the Genges, Damon wasn't too surprised. He glanced at her and said, "If you don't want to go, then don't."

"It's not that. I'm just curious why Tom went abroad in the first place," Nyla questioned.

Damon set down the document he had been reading and concisely explained to Nyla what had happened between Valarie and Tom since their breakup.

Chapter 853

After listening, Nyla was so angry that she felt like hitting someone. "That jerk! How could he have the nerve to come back?!"

Damon got up and walked over to her, patting her back. "Alright, it's not worth getting worked up over someone like that. Besides, Valarie is with Brandon now. He'll take good care of her." "That's different," Nyla countered.

Just because Valarie was happy now didn't mean the hurt Tom had caused her in the past had disappeared.

"If you don't like him, just skip the party," Damon suggested.

Nyla was about to respond when Damon's phone rang. Seeing that it was a call from the hospital, he quickly answered.

"Mr. Sumner, Mr. Jayston's health has improved enough for him to be discharged. When would you like to come in to handle the paperwork?" a nurse asked.

Hearing this, Damon felt a wave of relief. "I'll be there shortly."

Nyla overheard the conversation. When Damon ended the call, she said, "I'll go with you." "Okay," Damon answered.

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On the way to the hospital, Nyla pondered where she could arrange for Harrison to stay.

Ideally, she would want him to live with them so she could take care of him. But both she and Mason were staying at Damon's villa, and Damon might not want Harrison moving in. While she was lost in thought, the car pulled up in front of the hospital.

"Nyla? Nyla?" Damon called.

Nyla snapped back to reality and turned to him. "I was just daydreaming." "What were you thinking about, to get so lost in thought?" Damon asked. "Nothing. Let's hurry and take care of the discharge paperwork," she replied.

She avoided Damon's gaze, unbuckled her seatbelt, and opened the door to get out.

Damon was skeptical but didn't press her for answers.

In less than ten minutes, they arrived at Harrison's hospital room.

Just as Nyla was about to push the door open, she heard sobbing from inside, "Harrison, I had no choice back then... I still love you. I hope you can forgive me..."

Recognizing the voice as Wren's, Nyla frowned and pushed the door open. Harrison and Wren turned to look at the door.

Upon seeing Nyla, Harrison's surprise quickly shifted to excitement and joy, while Wren looked shocked and disbelieving.

Gabriel had mentioned that Nyla

was alive and back in Saintornia, but Wren hadn't believed it. Now, seeing Nyla standing right in front of her, she finally accepted it-Nyla@eally hadn't died!

Wiping her tears, Wren looked at Nyla with red-rimmed eyes. "Nyla, I can't believe you're really alive! How have you been these past five years?"

Nyla's expression remained

impassive as she said, "Ms. Hackett,

you and my father are already divorced We have no relationship now, and I don't need to report my whereabouts to you. I'm here to take my father home. If you have nothing else, please leave."

Nyla had had a huge falling out with Harrison, and Wren had played a significant role in that. She felt no fondness for Wren whatsoever.

Wren's expression stiffened for a moment, and it took her several seconds to force a smile. "Nyla, I just care about you. There's no other intention." Although Wren was over 50, she looked to be in her 30s, thanks to good maintenance and the pampered lifestyle she had led in recent years. However, her current cautious demeanor made her appear somewhat pitiful.

If this had been the past, Harrison would have defended Wren. Now, he simply watched with indifference.

Chapter 854

After marrying Wren, Harrison had treated her and Gabriel as well as he could have. Even after falling seriously ill, he had set aside money for their security. However, shortly after his kidney transplant, Wren suddenly filed for divorce.

Before leaving, she had told him she didn't want to spend her life confined to a hospital and home-she wanted her own life, her freedom. Not long after, she remarried a wealthy businessman. Now, she had come crying to him, claiming the businessman was treating her poorly and that she wanted to return to him, insisting she still loved him.

Harrison didn't believe a word of it.

"We were married for nearly ten years. Even though we're divorced now, I don't want to speak harshly to you. Just leave and don't come looking for me again. I don't want to see you," Harrison said. Wren burst into tears at his words, asking, "Harrison, are you really so heartless?"

"I don't know what you think you can gain from me, but you'll get nothing. You can leave now," Harrison replied.

Wren stiffened, her gaze flicking to the key hanging around Harrison's neck before she quickly averted her eyes. "Take good care of your health, Harrison. I'll come see you again next time." Harrison said nothing, his expression aloof.

After Wren grabbed her bag and said goodbye to Nyla and Damon, she left the room.

Once the three of them were alone, Damon turned to Nyla. "I'll go handle the discharge paperwork. You stay here with your dad."

"Okay," Nyla answered.

In less than half an hour, Damon had completed the discharge procedures. When he returned to the room, Nyla was packing Harrison's belongings.

"Nyla, your dad can move in with us at the villa now that he's been discharged," Damon said.

Nyla paused and looked up at Damon before shaking her head. "No need. My dad just said he's feeling fine and wants to live on his own for now."

"Then, I'll help him find a place," Damon offered.

"The old house he lived in with my mom is still around. He plans to stay there, and I've already arranged for someone to clean it. He can move in today," Nyla said. Seeing they had made their plans, Damon nodded. "Alright."

Nyla quickly finished packing, and Damon drove Harrison home.

...

An hour later, they stopped in front of an aging residential building. The neighborhood was quite old, and the environment wasn't ideal, with most of the residents being elderly. Noticing the car parked below, several residents poked their heads out of windows, curious about the newcomers.

Nyla and Damon got out and helped Harrison from the back seat.

Harrison looked up at the building, nostalgia welling in his eyes. This place held over a decade of memories with Nyla's mother, Emerald Kinsey.

They had loved each other deeply,

but Harrison had been consumed

with building his business while Nyla was still elementary school. He

had neglected Emerald, who ultimately asked for a divorce, unable to take the strain any longer.

Harrison had tried for a month to win her back but finally had to accept her decision.

He had planned to pursue Emerald again after their divorce, only for her to leave the country the very next day. Since then, there had been no news of her.

In the years that followed, Harrison

secured his first major investment and gradually built Harris Pharmaceuticals. Eventually, he moved Nyla to a larger home but never sold this place.

Whenever he missed Emerald, he would return to look at it, as if she were still around. Nyla supported Harrison up the stairs.

The old-style buildings had a

staircase in the center, with a unit on the left and one on the right.

Harrison lived in Unit 301, which had

beamed and had its door open

to air out the space.

Having been unoccupied for years, the musty smell of dust greeted them as soon as they stepped inside.

The cleaning lady Nyla had hired was working in the kitchen.

Hearing their footsteps, she walked out and greeted Nyla with a smile, "Ms. Kinsey, I've finished cleaning everywhere else. You can take a look. I just need to finish up the kitchen."

Chapter 855

"Okay, thank you for your hard work," Nyla replied.

"It's no trouble at all. I'll get back to cleaning now," the cleaning lady replied.

Nyla nodded. "Sure."

The cleaning lady quickly returned to the kitchen, and soon the sounds of clattering came from inside.

Nyla helped Harrison sit down on the sofa. He looked around the living room with a sense of nostalgia.

His eyes landed on the lines on the wall that marked Nyla's height, and he couldn't help but smile. "Nyla, go stand by that height chart. I want to see how tall you are now." Following his gaze, Nyla smiled and walked over to the entrance, leaning against the wall.

The highest mark barely reached her waist, and Harrison sighed softly. "I remember the last height mark was made by your mother."

Nyla nodded, a hint of sadness crossing her face. Not long after that line had been recorded, her parents had divorced.

The day Emerald had left the country, Nyla had been on her way to an out-of-town competition. She hadn't even had the chance to say goodbye.

As Harrison became busier with work, her height was no longer marked on the wall. When the company finally stabilized, he moved them to a larger house.

Looking back, Nyla thought Harrison had probably been trying to avoid thinking about her mother, burying himself in work during that time.

Moving away seemed to be an effort to escape painful memories.

Noticing the somber atmosphere, Damon spoke up. "Nyla, which room is yours? Show me."

He was curious about what her childhood room had been like.

Nyla suppressed her sadness and pointed to the room on the left. "This is my room."

There was a sticker of a cartoon cat on the door. The cat's ears and paws were missing, leaving behind only a yellowed outline.

Nyla approached the door, took a deep breath, and slowly pushed it open.

As soon as the door creaked, memories flooded back-Emerald sitting on the bed, telling her stories to help her sleep on restless nights, guiding her hand gently as she learned to write, staying up all night to care for her when she was sick...

Blinking back tears, Nyla stepped into the room.

Damon followed her in, glancing around the small space.

The room was simple-a solid wooden table, a wooden stool, a bed, and a small wardrobe.

The bed was covered with an old patterned bedspread and quilt, neatly folded with a small pillow on top. It was clear someone had been keeping the room clean and tidy.

Damon could almost picture little Nyla sitting at the table by the window, concentrating on her homework.

He couldn't help but smile at the thought.

He sat down on the bed, his long

legs making it seem smaller than it was, and smiled at Nyla. "Do you have any photos from when you were a kid? I'd love to see what you looked like."

"Yeah, let me find some," Nyla replied.

Chapter 856

Nyla opened the left drawer of the desk, relying on her memories, and sure enough, her childhood photo album was there. She pulled it out, dusted it off, and opened it.

The first page displayed a photo of her at one-month-old. She was lying on a bed, wearing a pink knitted hat adorned with colorful flowers, and dressed in matching knitted clothes her mother had made. Looking at the rosy-cheeked baby, Nyla couldn't help but smile.

Damon had approached her from behind, peering at the album in her hands, and smiled back. "You were so cute as a kid."

Nyla turned around and handed him the album. "Take your time looking through it. I'll see what else Dad might need."

Damon nodded. "Okay."

Stepping out of the bedroom, Nyla didn't see Harrison in the living room.

After searching around, she found him on the balcony.

Harrison stood by the railing, gazing at the nearby elementary school playground with a hint of nostalgia.

He had lost quite a bit of weight during his hospital stay and was wearing the smallest clothes he could find, which still hung loosely on him, giving his figure a frail appearance.

Nyla bit her lip, walking over to him. "Dad, what are you looking at?"

Harrison pointed to the elementary school children running around the playground. "You went to school here when you were little. Do you remember?"

Nyla nodded. "I do."

"When you were in first grade, your mom would often come here to watch you play during gym class on Wednesdays. Sometimes, I'd come back and join her. You were so small back then," Harrison reminisced, gesturing to show her height. A fond smile appeared on his face. "Time flies. You've grown up so much."

The memories of elementary school felt distant to Nyla, with only a few fragments remaining.

However, she hadn't known her mother watched her from the balcony. They had never discussed it.

Seeing the sadness in Harrison's eyes, Nyla didn't want to dwell on those memories, fearing it would make him feel worse.

She quickly changed the subject. "By

the way, Dad, it's not convenient for you to live here alone. How about I hire a housekeeper to help with your daily needs?"

Harrison shook his head. "No need. I'm not that helpless yet. And I'd prefer not to have anyone else living here."

Nyla frowned, then suggested, "How

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about I find someone to come over daily, cook for you, and clean afterward? That way, they won't disturb you too much."

Seeing that he was about to refuse again, she pressed on, "You wouldn't want me to worry every day about whether you're eating property, would you?"

"Alright," Harrison relented.

"It's windy outside," Nyla said. "Let me help you back inside to rest."

After supporting Harrison back to his room, Nyla noticed the house was lacking basic supplies, so she decided to make a trip to the supermarket. She stepped into the bedroom and saw Damon still looking at the album. She raised an eyebrow. "Still not done?"

Damon looked up and handed her a photo. "Is this your mom?"

Nyla glanced down and nodded. "Yeah, my mom didn't like taking photos, so we don't have many together."

Noticing Damon staring intently at her mother's picture with a deep look in his eyes, Nyla frowned. "Why are you staring at my mom's photo?"

"I feel like I've seen her somewhere before..." Damon answered.

Nyla rejected the idea. "My mom left the country when I was in elementary school. You couldn't have met her."

Chapter 857

Damon blinked and nodded. "Yeah, maybe it's just someone who looks a lot like your mom."

Nyla didn't dwell on the topic any longer. She placed the photo back in the album and closed it. "I'm heading to the supermarket to pick up some essentials. Want to come with me?" "Sure," Damon agreed.

After putting the album back in the drawer, Nyla and Damon left the house together.

At the supermarket, Nyla walked ahead, picking out items while Damon pushed the cart behind her. Their attractive pairing caught the attention of several shoppers.

Once they had finished gathering the essentials, they approached the spice aisle.

Nyla turned to Damon and asked, "Should I buy some spices and groceries? We could cook dinner at my dad's place tonight."

"Sounds good to me," Damon replied.

"What do you feel like eating?" Nyla asked.

"Anything's fine," Damon answered.

Nyla stared at him, slightly annoyed. "You've been distracted since we entered the store. Is there something on your mind?"

Damon shook his head. "No, I'm just thinking about steamed fish. Let's pick one out later."

Seeing that he wasn't going to share, Nyla frowned but decided to let it go. She turned and walked into the spice aisle to begin selecting what they needed. Watching her, Damon grew thoughtful. He was certain he had met Nyla's mother before.

According to Nyla, Emerald had moved abroad when Nyla was in elementary school.

Given that Damon had lived abroad until he was 15, he might have crossed paths with Emerald. Yet, he couldn't quite recall where he had seen her. Suddenly, his phone buzzed. It was Spencer.

"Mr. Sumner, I've sent Drake's

information to your email. By the way, during Mr. Genge's time abroad, he had quite a bit of contact with him, and the two companies have been closely cooperating," Spencer reported.

"Got it," Damon replied before hanging up.

He opened his email and downloaded the information Spencer had sent.

The file on Drake was

straightforward his parents were locals who had migrated while he grew up abroad, excelling in school. He later attended a renowned university, then joined MK Company after graduating. Three years later, he became an executive and was now a vice CEO worth billions.

From the information, it seemed there was no connection between Drake and Nyla, nor any reason for him to investigate her.

Damon's expression darkened as he called Spencer back, speaking quietly. "Use Falcon to dig deeper."

Falcon was a group of hackers Damon had trained abroad, known for their ability to uncover just about anything.

Spencer was taken aback, sounding anxious. "Mr. Sumner, it's unnecessary to deploy the team just to check on Drake-

"Just do as I say," Damon instructed before hanging up.

Spencer sighed and dialed an international number.

A party was in full swing at a manor

in Meristate. The crowd was filled

with tall, handsome men and curvy women, creating a lively

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atmosphere.

Suddenly, the phone of a man sitting by the pool rang.

Immediately, the lively mansion fell silent, with everyone's eyes fixed on the man's phone.

He answered the call. After a brief conversation, he simply hummed before hanging up.

"Boss, does that mean we have work to do?" asked a woman in a red bikini, holding a glass of champagne and looking excited.

Chapter 858

They hadn't been contacted in recent years, and boredom was beginning to set in.

The man removed his sunglasses, revealing bright, lively eyes that outshone all the women present. He replied, "Mm, get ready to work."

At his words, the partying crowd dropped their wine and champagne glasses and rushed into the manor.

There had originally been four rooms on the left side of the manor's second floor. Now, they were all connected to a long room with over a dozen computers set up.

The group quickly seated themselves in front of their computers, powered them on, and turned to look at the man who entered last.

The man powered on his own computer and announced, his expression unreadable, "I'm sending your tasks now."

Soon, a file appeared on the group's computers. As they reviewed the contents, the room filled with the sounds of typing and clicking.

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When Nyla and Damon returned home after shopping, the cleaning lady had already left.

As they entered the kitchen, Nyla began preparing dinner, while Damon offered to help. "Nyla, let me lend a hand."

Nyla handed him some vegetables and instructed, "Wash these for me."

"Sure," Damon replied.

He took the bag, placed it in the sink, and began washing the greens. Together, they quickly made a four-dish meal with soup.

After they finished cooking, Nyla asked Damon to call Harrison for dinner while she tidied up the kitchen.

As Harrison stepped out of his room and saw the beautifully arranged dishes on the table, a complex emotion crossed his face. His daughter, who once couldn't cook anything, had now prepared a full meal in no time. Reflecting on this, he felt guilty-not only to Emerald but to Nyla as well.

Noticing his somber expression, Nyla handed him a plate and said, "Dad, let's eat."

"Nyla, have you had a tough time these past few years?" Harrison asked.

If he hadn't shown favoritism toward Wren, Nyla might not have been so cold and distant for the past five years. Just thinking about it caused a sharp pain in his heart.

Nyla brushed it off. "It's all in the past. There's no need to bring it up." Regret flashed in Harrison's eyes, and he felt even more guilty.

Nyla placed some beef on his plate and calmly reassured him, "Don't dwell on it. I don't blame you anymore. If it weren't for those five

years, I wouldn't be who I am today."

Now that Harrison was back in her life, she could care for him while also being with the person she loved, along with their adorable son. She felt content.

People needed to move forward. If one constantly wallowed in self-pity and blamed the world, life would only become more twisted and painful.

Harrison saw how unfazed she was, how she truly didn't mind the past anymore, and sighed. "After living all these years, I've realized I'm not as clear-headed as you."

Nyla replied, "The most important thing for you now is to take care of your health and enjoy your retirement. Don't worry about anything else." Harrison smiled. "Okay."

He should learn to be content. After all, he had prayed every day for Nyla's safety over the past five years. Now that wish had come true-he shouldn't ask for more.

...

After dinner, Nyla and Damon stayed with Harrison for a while before leaving.

On the way home, Nyla received a call from Brandon, asking if Valarie was with her. Although Nyla had felt a bit drowsy, she instantly perked up at the mention.

Chapter 859

"She's not with me. You can't reach her right now?" Nyla asked.

"Yeah, she told me this afternoon she was going to a class reunion tonight. I offered to pick her up, but I got delayed by a meeting. By the time I got there, everyone had already left. And she's not answering my calls," Brandon explained. Nyla frowned. "Don't panic just yet. Did she say what kind of reunion it was?"

"I think it was a high school reunion," Brandon replied.

"Okay, I'll ask around," Nyla said.

She and Valarie had been in neighboring classes in high school, so she knew quite a few people from Valarie's class.

After hanging up, Nyla messaged someone from the other class to find out who had been at the dinner that night.

When she learned that Valarie was unreachable, her contact immediately began asking around and soon called Nyla back.

"Nyla, I just checked with the class president and others. They said a guy came by and took Valarie. They'd all been drinking a bit, and when they saw Valarie didn't resist, they didn't think much of it-figured he was her boyfriend." Nyla's heart lurched. "Okay, thanks for the info."

She ended the call and quickly reached out to Brandon, asking him to check the restaurant's security footage for the license plate number of the car that had taken Valarie.

"Got it, thanks, Aunt Nyla," Brandon replied.

He entered the restaurant, where the manager promptly escorted him to the security room, knowing he was there to review the footage.

"Mr. Sumner, this is the footage from around 8:50 p.m.," the manager informed him.

In the footage, Valarie and about a dozen of her classmates walked out of the restaurant. Their faces were slightly flushed, and their gazes were hazy.

Soon after, a black Maybach pulled up outside. A man who looked like an assistant got out and helped Valarie into the car. After closing the door, he returned to the car, and they quickly drove off.

The restaurant's cameras hadn't captured the car's license plate.

Seeing the dark expression on

Brandon's face, the manager broke into a sweat. "Mr. Sumner, how

about we check the roadside outwe

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cameras? They must have captured the license plate..." FindNovel

"No need. Just rewind the footage one minute," Brandon replied.

The technician quickly complied, rewindin

to the moment when

man opened the car door and let
Valarie inside.

"Pause," Brandon commanded.

The image froze, revealing half of the man's face inside the car.

Brandon smirked. Though his smile was cold, an aura of impending storm
was crouded him, sending

QUMS

chills down everyone's spine

"Mr. Sumner..." The manager was so terrified that his legs felt weak.

Ignoring him, Brandon turned and strode out of the security room.

His secretary hurried after him. "Mr. Sumner, what's our next step?"

"Go to the Genges," Brandon answered, his voice icy, each word dripping with chilling
intent.

His secretary shuddered. "Understood."

Throughout the drive, neither Brandon's driver nor his secretary dared to breathe too
loudly.

The atmosphere in the car was suffocating as if the air itself had thickened.

Brandon sat in the back like an ice statue that could freeze anyone nearby.

When they arrived at the Genge residence, dozens of well-trained men in black stood
outside.

As Brandon stepped out of the car, the leader of the group approached and greeted
him. "Mr. Sumner."

Brandon's expression remained indifferent as he spoke. "Just break the door down."

"Yes, sir!" the leader said.

Chapter 860

The men charged toward the Genges' front door, ready to break it down, when suddenly the door swung open from the inside.

Seeing the group of black-clad men outside, the person inside showed no fear. His gaze landed on Brandon.

"Mr. Sumner, Mr. Genge is waiting for you," he said.

Brandon shot him a cold look. "You're not worthy to speak to me. If you don't want this to become a public spectacle, have Tom hand over my girlfriend." The man's expression froze slightly, and the tension in the air became palpable.

The black-clad men stood by, waiting for Brandon's signal. The moment he gave the order, they would storm the residence.

Brandon's patience wore thin due to the silence from the other side.

"Barge in," he ordered.

As his men started to move, a deep voice came from behind the door. "Mr. Sumner, why make such a fuss?"

Tom appeared at the door, smiling as if the dozen men outside posed no threat to him.

Brandon stared at him blankly. "Mr. Genge, please hand over my girlfriend, or I'll have to force my way in."

"Don't worry, Mr. Sumner. Valarie is fine-she just got a little drunk. I'll send her back tomorrow morning," Tom replied smoothly.

Brandon scoffed.

The scandal from five years ago, when Tom was caught cheating on Valarie, was still a popular topic of gossip. It was hard to believe he had the audacity to show his face again. "It looks like you're making me force my way in," Brandon remarked.

With a glance from him, the black-clad men prepared to charge.

The atmosphere grew more tense by the second, the air thick with anticipation.

Tom smirked. "Even if you force your way in, I won't let you take her."

"Then let's see about that!" Brandon snapped.

The tension escalated further as Tom's house staff, numbering over ten, appeared behind him. Though they wore service staff uniforms, it was clear they were well-trained fighters. Suddenly, Tom's phone rang, cutting through the silence.

Tom's expression darkened upon seeing Drake's name flash on the screen. He stared at the phone for several seconds before answering the call.

Whatever was said on the other end made Tom's veins bulge. He gripped the phone tightly, his face turning icy. After hanging up, he turned to the people behind him. "Back off."

The group exchanged confused

glances, disbelief written on their faces. Hadn't Tom just instructed them to stop Brandon and his men at all costs? Why were they being told to retreat now?

Despite their confusion, they didn't dare question him. Lowering their heads, they quickly turned to leave. Brandon was equally puzzled.

Why had Tom changed his mind after that call? Regardless, he was determined to take Valarie home tonight. "Tom, I'll say this one last time-hand over Valarie!" he demanded.

Tom didn't look at him. Instead, he turned to the housekeeper beside him. "Get two maids to bring Valarie out." "Understood," the housekeeper replied.

Before long, two maids appeared, leading Valarie out.

Brandon's expression darkened as he saw her eyes closed and her face flushed clearly intoxicated. If he hadn't come tonight, he shuddered to think what might have happened to her.

He rushed over and scooped Valarie up, turning to Tom with a cold glare. "I won't let this go lightly."

Tom clenched his fists as he

watched Valarie instinctively shrink

into Brandon's arms. When he'd

brought her back earlier, he'd

wanted to hold her as they got

out of

the car, but she had pushed him away in disgust. He had to enlist two maids to help her from the car into

the villa.

Valarie had been so resistant to him, yet she leaned into Brandon, showing clear dependence. A wave of jealousy surged within Tom, threatening to consume him whole.