

Trading My Ex for His Uncle (Nyla)

Chapter 881

As soon as Valarie finished speaking, Tom grabbed her chin and lowered his head abruptly. The sudden closeness brought him so near that he could smell the faint scent of roses on her. He swallowed hard, his breath quickening noticeably.

Valarie's face, however, remained expressionless as she looked at him, her gaze steady and indifferent, as if she were staring at a stranger passing by.

Once, her eyes had been filled with warmth and affection for him. She had always been there whenever he looked back.

Now, he could find no trace of the love she once had for him in her eyes.

A sharp pang spread from Tom's chest, filling his whole body. His hand, still holding her chin, trembled slightly. If only he had realized his feelings sooner, he wouldn't have lost her. "Tom, don't look at me with that guilty expression. I only find it pathetic," Valarie spat.

If he had broken things off cleanly rather than wavering between her and someone else, she wouldn't despise him as much as she did now.

That indecision-wanting to have it all-was what disgusted her most. It made her feel foolish for ever loving a man who had no sense of responsibility.

Tom's grip on her chin tightened, emotions flaring in his eyes. "Valarie "

Just then, his phone rang, cutting him off. He let her go and said, "Go home. We'll have plenty of time to talk later."

He turned and walked briskly toward the sofa.

Valarie didn't care about his sudden change of attitude. She simply turned and left.

Picking up the phone, Tom answered curtly, "Yes?"

"The sample you sent over didn't contain enough DNA. It would be best to obtain a sample, like a strand of hair," the person on the other end of the line said. Tom's eyes narrowed. "Understood."

"Do it as soon as possible. They're growing impatient," the caller reminded him.

"Got it." Tom hung up with a frown, already thinking about how to get a hair sample from Nyla.

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Meanwhile, Valarie had just left the Genge residence when a black G-Wagon suddenly pulled up in front of her.

The driver's side door opened, and Brandon stepped out.

"What are you doing here?" Valarie asked, surprised.

She hadn't told anyone where she was going, so how did he know?

Brandon looked at her calmly. "Valarie, before I answer that, shouldn't you explain why you're here? You told me you were done with Tom and wouldn't see him again. So why are you at his place?"

His questioning tone and expression made Valarie's face darken. "Did you rush over here just to question me?" Brandon said nothing, but his silence spoke volumes.

Valarie felt a wave of disappointment. She had trusted him completely and assumed he would have the same faith in her. Clearly, he didn't. He still doubted her feelings for Tom and feared she might rekindle something with him. The silence stretched between them.

Finally, Valarie spoke. "Brandon, I'm here because Mr. Updike came to me earlier. He told me that Tom was targeting the Updike Group because of me, so I came to handle it

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"I already told you I'm never going back to him, but obviously, you don't believe me. Did you think I'd fall back into old habits the moment I came shed

to see him? Is that why you here?"

Chapter 882

Brandon took a deep breath and explained, "Valarie, that's not what I think. I was just worried about you."

"What's there to worry about? Worried I'd fall for him again?" Valarie retorted.

The coldness in her gaze made Brandon clench his fists, his expression darkening. "Valarie, is it really necessary to be so sarcastic? You know how much Tom bothers me, yet you didn't tell me you were coming to see him.

"What if I had met with an ex-girlfriend behind your back without saying anything? Would you be completely unfazed?"

"Why wouldn't I be? I chose to be with you, so I'd trust you. But you obviously don't feel the same about me," Valarie countered.

For any relationship to last, there had to be mutual trust. If Brandon kept being this suspicious and paranoid, it would just wear down their feelings for each other.

"I told you I don't doubt you. If you'd told me beforehand, I wouldn't have shown up here. Don't you understand my point?" Brandon's gaze on Valarie was disappointed. "You say you won't do anything with him, but if that's the case, why is it so hard to just let me know? Is it really such a big deal?"

"I was in a rush and forgot. Besides, I didn't do anything wrong, so I don't owe you a report on where I go and who I meet," Valarie insisted.

Brandon smiled bitterly, lowering his eyes. "Then I have nothing left to say."

With that, he turned to get back in his car.

Valarie frowned, grabbing his arm. "Brandon, is this how you handle problems?"

He pushed her hand off gently, his gaze emotionless. "Valarie, let's both calm down."

All he wanted was for Valarie to keep him in the loop about seeing Tom, instead of hearing it from someone else. She didn't think it mattered because she believed she was being loyal. Neither could see eye to eye on this, so there was nothing left to say. Valarie looked down at her hand, her heart growing colder. She muttered, "Fine. If you want a break, then let's take a break."

Without another look at him, she walked past him to her car, got in, and drove off. Instead of going home, she went straight to Nyla's place.

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"Tell me he isn't the one with the

problem," Valarie said, launching into a rant as soon as she sat down. "When the Weir Group struggled, he didn't step in, and I didn't hold it against him-because we weren't together then.

"But this time, Zayn tried to drug me, and he still didn't do anything about it! Tom's the one who went after the Updikes.

"All I did was go talk to Tom, and he's acting like I did something wrong. If anyone should be angry, it's me!" Valarie huffed.

Nyla handed her a glass of water. "Here, have some water and take a breath."

Valarie took a sip, then asked, "So, whose fault do you think this is?"

"Honestly, neither of you is really at fault. It's just a communication issue. Brandon's younger than you, and he cares deeply about you, so of course he's sensitive about Tom.

"But you're six years older and have

more experience in relationships so you overlook things that feel significant to him. That probably makes him feel like you're indifferent," Nyla elaborated.

Valarie fell silent, reflecting on Nyla's words.

After a moment, she replied, "You're right... But I'm still not ready to talk to him."

Nyla laughed, "Why does love have to be so cut-and-dried? You two have different ways of handling things, and arguments happen during the adjustment period. What matters most is how you work things out afterward."

Chapter 883

Valarie thought for a moment and felt a headache.

"Forget it," she said. "I don't want to think about this right now."

After chatting with Nyla a bit longer, she got up to leave.

Once she was gone, Nyla headed to the study.

Inside, Damon was reading through some documents.

Hearing her enter, he looked up and asked, "Valarie already left?"

"Mm," Nyla hummed.

Seeing the slight furrow in Nyla's brows, Damon put down his papers. "What's on your mind?"

"She and Brandon had a fight," Nyla said. "I think now that Tom is back, there are going to be some serious problems."

Although Nyla was sure Valarie no longer had feelings for Tom, his constant interference in her life was like a thorn in Brandon's heart, pricking him just enough to chip away at their relationship. Damon's expression darkened. He wasn't particularly interested in the tension between Valarie and Brandon, but he had noticed that Tom had been in contact with Drake while overseas.

Now that Tom was back in the country, Damon suspected he had more motives than just getting back with Valarie.

Noticing Damon's silence, Nyla glanced up at him. "Why aren't you saying anything?"

Damon swallowed his doubts and gave her a gentle smile. "You're already busy worrying about our problems. Don't tell me you have time to worry about others, too."

Nyla looked at him, perplexed. "What problems could we possibly have?"

"Oh, we have plenty," Damon replied, teasing. "Like deciding when we'll give Buddy a little sister, or when we're finally getting married, where we'll hold the wedding, or even where to go for our honeymoon-" She cut him off, "You haven't even proposed. Besides, I'm not even sure I want to get married. We're fine just like this."

For her, what they had was no different from marriage. The certificate didn't matter.

"It's not fine to me. I want to see your name right next to mine on a marriage certificate," Damon said.

Nyla raised an eyebrow. "Then you'll have to try harder. Maybe someday I'll be in the mood to get married."

Damon was about to reply when his phone rang. "I need to take this."

She nodded. "Sure, I'll go find a book to read. You work."

As she turned to the bookshelf, he watched her with a fond smile, then picked up the call.

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"Mr. Sumner," Spencer said on the other end, "there's been a report from Falcon. Today, Drake's secretary took a wine glass to the biggest DNA testing center in

Meristate for a test. The name on the sample was... Ms. Kinsey's. Mr. Genge's secretary was the one who sent the wine glass."

Damon's grip on the phone tightened as his breathing grew heavy. He glanced at Nyla, then got up and walked down the hall until he

s out of earshot. Contenne

"Who is the other party they're testing her with?" His voice was cold.

"The name listed was Amy-Falcon is still working on the details," Spencer reported.

Damon's eyes narrowed. "Understood. Tell Falcon to keep investigating."

After ending the call, Damon didn't immediately return to the study. Instead, he opened a window at the end of the hall.

The cold night air swept in, but he didn't flinch, staring out into the inky darkness, lost in thought.

Whoever Amy was, she had to be a

woman. Could she be related to Nyla? If Drake suspected a familial connection, that would have to start with her parents to confirm.

With this in mind, Damon resolved to find a way to speak with Harrison soon.

After spending nearly half an hour outside, he returned to the study. When he entered, Nyla looked up. "Took you a while. What was the call about?" "Just needed a break, so I took a moment to rest," he answered.

Chapter 884

Seeing Damon look weary, Nyla pursed her lips before asking, "Want me to give you a massage?" Damon shook his head. "No need. I'm good now."

"Alright," Nyla replied.

Damon spent another hour working on his documents before they both headed to bed.

After their showers, he offered to dry Nyla's hair.

"Aren't you tired? I can do it myself," she said.

"I'll do it," he insisted, taking the hairdryer from her with such determination that she had to let him.

"Fine," she relented.

Turning her back to him, she let the warmth of the dryer lull her into relaxation, nearly dozing off by the time he finished.

Setting the dryer aside, he told her, "You go ahead and sleep. I just remembered I have one more document to sign, and then I'll be up."

Nyla, thinking nothing of it, nodded. "Okay."

Once out of the room, Damon glanced at the few strands of her hair he held in his hand, his expression unreadable.

In under ten minutes, he returned, slipping into bed quietly.

However, his mind kept whirling, thinking of ways to get a hair sample from Harrison. Just as he was lost in thought, Nyla's voice cut through the silence. "Damon, is something going on at the company? You seem a bit off today, like something's weighing on you," she said.

"No, it's nothing. Just tired," he replied.

He felt her hand slip into his, her grip gentle yet reassuring.

"Good. If anything's ever on your mind, don't keep it bottled up. I may not be able to solve it, but talking always helps," she said soothingly.

He squeezed her hand, whispering, "Alright."

After a while, Damon spoke up again. "Hey, do you want to visit your dad tomorrow? It's been a while."

Nyla wanted to say it had only been a few days since their last visit, but she was worried about him, so she said, "Sure. The cameras I ordered arrived. We can set one up in his living room so I can keep an eye on him."

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He kissed her forehead. "Sounds good. Now, get some sleep." "Goodnight," she replied.

By the following evening, Damon and Nyla arrived at Harrison's apartment building. As they pulled up, a red BMW parked at the entrance caught their attention.

After parking, they headed upstairs, only to find Wren standing at the door.

Although she was decked out in designer clothes and carried herself differently than she had five years prior, Nyla recognized her instantly. Wren didn't notice their approach and was speaking through the door. "Harrison, open up. We need to talk."

Harrison's frustrated voice sounded from inside. "I know what you're after, and I'll never agree to it. Leave now, or I'm calling the police."

Wren froze. Just as she raised her

hand to knock again, a cold voice spoke from behind her. "Ms. Hackett, if you continue harassing my father, I'll call the police right now."

en FindNovel

Wren turned around quickly. She wasn't surprised when she saw Nyla and Damon. She forced a smile. "Nyla, you're here to see your father?"

Her tone was casual, as if they hadn't had a falling out years ago.

Nyla refused to play along, her expression steely. "This has nothing to do with you. Leave immediately."

Chapter 885

Wren didn't seem upset by the cold reception. She maintained a smile and said, "You and your dad are finally getting along again. I don't want to disturb you. I'm staying in Shoal Bay on the north side of the city now. Come by if you have time." Nyla stayed silent, her demeanor unmistakably cold.

Only as Wren brushed past did Nyla give her a low warning. "I'm setting up a camera at the door. If I catch you bothering my dad again, I'll call the police."

Wren paused for a moment but left quickly without a word.

Nyla knocked on the door. "Dad, you can open the door now. She's gone."

The door swung open immediately.

Upon seeing Nyla and Damon, Harrison's previously tense face relaxed into a smile. "Nyla, Mr. Sumner, you're here! Come on in."

As they entered the living room, the smell of food wafted from the kitchen, where the housekeeper was likely cooking.

Harrison chuckled. "I didn't expect you to come over. I'll ask the housekeeper to make a couple more dishes."

"I'll handle it," Nyla said, passing a monitor to Damon. "If you have time, go ahead and set this up." "Alright," Damon answered.

Once she was in the kitchen, Damon turned to Harrison. "Mr. Jayston, do you know why Wren came looking for you?"

Judging by how Wren had

abandoned Harrison in a care facility for years, it was clear she didn't care for him. Now that she was here, there had to be an ulterior motive.

en FindNovel

Harrison nodded. "She wants this apartment."

"What do you mean?" Damon asked.

Harrison sighed. "When we were married, promised her a property, and she had her eye on this one. didn't agree, though, so I bought her a villa instead, and she dropped her claim on this place. FindNovel

"Later on, during Nyla's university years, the company went bankrupt due to an accident. Wren sold the villa to help pay the employees, and soon after, I got sick. "She took care of me for a few years, but after Nyla went missing, she asked for a divorce and married Jane's uncle soon afterward.

"When we divorced, she didn't ask

for anything she just wanted to finalize things as fast as possible. Recently though, she heard a rumor

about this property being upor

redevelopment, so she's here to claim half of the compensation."

"You're divorced. She has no claim to any of this, whether or not it's redeveloped," Damon replied.

Harrison hesitated, speaking in a low voice. "She brought my old hospital bills and said if I didn't give her half, she'd take me to court." Damon frowned. "Even if it gets

redeveloped, she'd only get a few million at most. She shouldn't need that kind of money."

Judging by the high-end car Wren had driven here and her expensive attire, she definitely didn't seem in need of a few million dollars. Harrison shook his head. "I have no idea."

"I'll look into it," Damon said. "I'll let you know if anything comes up. In the meantime, if she bothers you again, just call the police."

Chapter 886

Harrison nodded. "Alright. You and Nyla don't need to worry about me. Wren and I are divorced. There's nothing she can do."

"Alright. One more thing-do you have any family abroad?" Damon asked.

Harrison looked momentarily stunned, then, after a pause, shook his head. "No, I don't think so. Why do you ask?"

"Just curious," Damon replied. "And Nyla's mother's side?"

Harrison grew quiet at the mention of Emerald.

After a long pause, he finally said, "Emerald was an orphan. I tried helping her search for her family in the past, but we didn't find anything."

"How did you two meet?" Damon asked.

Recalling the memory, Harrison smiled. "We met on a rainy day. I was on my way home from work when a downpour started, so I ducked under an awning for shelter. She happened to come by too. I fell in love with her the moment I saw her." "We got married, and she stayed home after that to manage the house while I went into business."

His face held nothing but warmth and nostalgia as he recounted those days.

Damon's brows furrowed. If Harrison had no overseas relatives and Emerald was an orphan, then "Amy" might be someone related to Nyla's mother.

At that thought, he quickly asked, "Mr. Jayston, do you remember the name of the orphanage Nyla's mother stayed at?"

"Yes," Harrison replied. "It was called Hope House. It used to be on Banyan Road in the north of Saintornia. Now it's near the school in the east."

He then looked at Damon with curiosity. "But why do you ask?"

Damon hesitated, choosing not to reveal too much. "I found some information that might lead to Nyla's mother's relatives, but nothing's confirmed yet. Once I'm sure, I'll let you know."

Shock flashed in Harrison's eyes. "Emerald was an orphan, and you found her family?"

"We're still not certain," Damon replied.

Seeing Damon hold back, Harrison didn't press further. He only sighed

and said, "If Emerald were still around, she'd be thrilled to know her family had been found."

Sadness shadowed his face, and he seemed to age right before Damon's eyes.

Damon was about to say something came out of the kitchen

when Nyla

"Damon, can

holding a bowl of soup

you grab me a potholder?"

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"Of course," Damon replied.

He went to the dining table, picked up a potholder, and placed it on the table.

Nyla set down the soup, smiling. "We're having meatballs in egg-lemon sauce tonight."

"Perfect. Buddy loves meatballs. He'll be excited," Damon chimed in.

Just then, the doorbell rang.

"That must be the driver dropping him off now," Nyla said with a smile, walking over to the door. As expected, it was Walter with Mason.

Nyla opened the door, and Mason immediately launched into her rubbing his head against her. "Mommy, I missed you so much!"

Nyla's expression was tender. "Mommy missed you too."

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"What about me?" Damon asked. "Didn't you miss your Daddy?"

Mason released Nyla, glanced up at Damon, and said, "I missed you too, Daddy."

His tone was notably less enthusiastic, and there was even a hint of indifference.

Chapter 887

Damon was rendered speechless.

Mason didn't care. He walked right past Damon and ran straight to Harrison, stopping in front of him. "Hi, Grandpa!"

Seeing his adorable grandson, Harrison couldn't stop smiling. "Hello, Buddy! Are you hungry? Let's wash our hands and have dinner, okay?" Mason nodded obediently. "Okay, Grandpa!"

Nyla led Mason to wash his hands. When they returned to the dining table, Damon had already served their meals.

Mason climbed into his chair. Instead of eating, he looked expectantly at Harrison.

Harrison was puzzled. "Buddy, why aren't you eating? Don't you like the food?"

Mason shook his head. "No, Grandpa. You eat first."

Harrison immediately understood. Mason was waiting for him to start.

Smiling, Harrison picked up some food. "Alright, let's all eat now."

"Okay!" Mason happily grabbed a meatball. He had always loved meatballs-he could never get enough.

After eating a few, he reached for more, but Nyla stopped him. "No more meatballs, or it might not digest well later. Try something else, okay?"

Mason looked disappointed. He had hoped his mother might spoil him a bit since they were at his grandfather's house. Guess he was wrong.

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By the time dinner ended, it was past 8:00 p.m.

Knowing Harrison went to bed early, Nyla and Damon got ready to leave with Mason.

Harrison looked at Mason reluctantly. "Come back with Buddy again soon, alright?"

Watching Mason's lively energy reminded Harrison of Nyla's childhood, filling him with fond memories.

"Sure," Nyla replied.

"I'd like a quick word with Damon. Nyla, could you take Buddy downstairs first?" Harrison requested.

Nyla looked at her dad, puzzled. What could he want to talk to Damon about?

Damon turned to her, calm as he handed her the car keys. "It's a bit cold downstairs. You and Buddy wait for me in the car."

She nodded, deciding not to question him, and took Mason downstairs.

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After waiting a while in the car, Damon finally joined them.

As soon as he got in, Nyla asked, "What did my dad want to talk to you about?"

Starting the car, Damon replied, "He just told me to take good care of you. Nothing much."

"That needed to be said in private?" Nyla asked.

"Well, he also warned me that if I ever mistreat you, he won't let me off," Damon added.

Although Nyla didn't entirely believe him, she knew there was no point in pushing if he wasn't willing to say

more. She let it go, and the car fell

silent.

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While Damon kept his eyes on the road, his thoughts drifted back to his earlier conversation with Harrison.

Harrison had mentioned that when he had tried to trace Emerald's family years ago, strange accidents had always interrupted his progress, making it feel like he was back at square one each time.

He had assumed it was just due to a lack of records and eyewitnesses.

Now, thinking over today's

conversation with Damon, Harrison

couldn't shake the suspicion that someone might have been

deliberately sabotaging his efforts.

en FindNovel

If Harrison was right and someone had indeed tried to hide Emerald's origins, there was more to her being a supposed orphan than met the eye.

It looked like Damon would have to start from Tom.

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When they reached the villa and walked inside, Nyla noticed Spencer standing in the living room holding a file.

He nodded to her. "Good evening, Ms. Kinsey."

Chapter 888

Nyla nodded and turned to Damon. "Looks like you have work to take care of. I'll go put Buddy to bed."

"Alright," Damon said, then turned to Spencer. "Let's talk in the study."

Once inside, with the door closed, Damon handed Spencer two hair samples.

"Take these in for testing. I need the results within a day," he instructed.

Spencer carefully took the samples. "Understood, Mr. Sumner."

"How's the investigation on Drake coming along?" Damon asked.

Spencer's expression grew tense.

Lowering his voice, he said, "Drake knows someone's looking into him, and Falcon was almost caught. They've stepped back for now."

Damon's gaze hardened. "Got it. Tell them to lay low and stay out of sight for a while."

"Alright. But they did manage to find out that this 'Amy' is somehow connected to the Nixons," Spencer added.

"That fits with what I suspected. The Nixons have deep roots in Meristate, and any investigation will be risky. Keep tabs on Tom-let me know if he makes any moves," Damon replied. "Understood," Spencer said.

Once Spencer left, Damon sat alone in the study, lost in thought for a while before finally heading back upstairs.

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Late that night, Nyla's phone suddenly rang, pulling her from sleep.

Groggily, she reached for it and answered. "Hello?"

"Nyla, Brandon is too much... I'll never forgive him... sniff..." Valarie's voice was tearful and slurred, nearly drowned out by loud background noise. She sounded like she was at a bar. Nyla glanced at the clock. It was 3:00 a.m.

Her frown deepened with worry. "Valarie, where are you right now?"

"I'm at... a bar... having a drink. Want to come?" Valarie asked.

"Which bar? Are you with friends?" Nyla pressed.

"No... Men are all jerks... Not a single decent one..." Valarie muttered.

Nyla had to ask twice before Valarie finally slurred out the bar's names. Nyla ended the call and got up to change, preparing to go get her.

Damon, now awake, said, "It's late, Nyla. I'll call Brandon and have him pick her up." "Are you sure? They were just fighting. What if he doesn't want to go?" Nyla asked, worried. "He will," Damon said confidently.

He picked up his phone and called Brandon, who answered quickly. "Uncle Damon, what's up?" "Where are you right now?" Damon asked.

Brandon named a club about ten kilometers from where Valarie was drinking.

"Valarie's at Tunes. Go take her home," Damon instructed.

After a pause, Brandon said, "I'll get someone to pick her up."

Damon let out a cold laugh. "Then get someone else to be her boyfriend, too." "Uncle Damon, you don't know what's going on between us," Brandon argued.

"I don't need to. Your girlfriend's drunk at a bar, and if you don't care enough to get her, you don't deserve her," Damon retorted before hanging up.

Nyla turned to him. "What if he still won't go?"

"I'll have Walter check on her. If he gets there before Brandon, you can help Valarie rethink this relationship tomorrow," Damon said.

He called Walter and instructed him to go to the bar and check on Valarie.

When he finished, he turned to Nyla.

"Go back

Sleep. I've asked my

secretary to contact the bar

manager to keep an eye on Valarie. She'll be fine."

Chapter 889

Hearing Damon's words, Nyla finally relaxed. "Alright."

Meanwhile, Brandon's expression remained cold as he hung up, stood, and walked out the door.

He arrived at the bar 20 minutes later.

Valarie was seated at the bar, downing drink after drink.

A few men eyed her, but none made a move.

Brandon approached her, snatched the glass from her hand, and said softly, "I'm taking you home."

Already drunk, Valarie looked up and burst into laughter when she saw him. "How can you be here too? This is so funny!"

Upon seeing that she didn't even recognize him, Brandon's expression darkened. He grabbed her wrist and started pulling her toward the door.

Drunk and slow to react, Valarie nearly stumbled as he yanked her along.

Just then, another hand grabbed her other wrist.

Brandon stopped and turned around.

Standing behind them was Tom, holding onto Valarie's other hand.

Brandon's expression turned icy, a chill seeming to settle over him.

"Let go of her!" he barked.

Tom didn't seem to care about the anger in Brandon's eyes. He merely stared back, his face expressionless. "You don't have the right to give me orders."

"Valarie is my girlfriend. Aren't you worried people might misunderstand, seeing you holding her hand so openly?" Brandon asked.

Tom smirked. "Why should I care? I've always had intentions with her. I came back this time to get back together with her."

Brandon tightened his grip on Valarie's hand without thinking, his face darkening further.

A few curious onlookers recognized them and immediately began taking photos with their phones.

"Mr. Genge, you really are pushing

the limits of shamelessness. No matter how much you try to

interfere, Valarie will never give you another chance," Brandon said.

Tom wasn't bothered by the provocation. To him, Brandon was still too inexperienced. A man in his 20s might be passionate, but he was also naive, unaware that being in a relationship was a game of strategy.

The key was understanding the other person's psyche, knowing when they needed something most, and slowly weaving one's way into their life.

At this point, Brandon had no leverage over Valarie. He couldn't help her with the Updikes or the Weir Group.

"Whether or not she gives me a chance is not up to you," Tom said.

Their eyes locked, and the air between them crackled with tension.

The crowd quickly backed away, forming a sort of buffer zone between the two men.

Just as the atmosphere was about to reach a boiling point, Valarie suddenly jerked her hands free from both men and staggered toward the door. Brandon rushed to catch her. "Valarie..."

Valarie looked up at him, her vision

blurry. She saw two Brandons in front of her and mumbled, "One is already annoying enough. If there were two... I'd be dead from O annoyance."

Brandon was rendered speechless.

Tom stepped forward, attempting to pull Valarie from Brandon's arms. Before he could touch her, she slapped his hand away.

"Ugly freak! Stay away from me!" she cried.

Tom froze, staring at her with darkened eyes. "What did you just say?"

Chapter 890

"I said you're an ugly freak!" Valarie shot back, her face flushed, her eyes unfocused.

Tom's expression darkened. He knew he shouldn't argue with a drunk person, but hearing her call him ugly still stung.

Brandon couldn't help but laugh mockingly. "Did you hear that? My girlfriend doesn't want ugly freaks touching her. Next time, stay out of her business."

Tom glared at him coldly. "Brandon, you and she aren't right for each other. I suggest you let go of her before you get hurt."

Brandon retorted, "I don't need you to tell me what to do. Mind your own business."

Without another word, he took Valarie and left.

As they walked away, Tom's eyes narrowed. It seemed like it was time to give the Sumner Group something to deal with.

Outside the bar, the cold wind hit, and Valarie shivered, sobering up slightly. She turned to see Brandon still holding onto her, and her expression shifted. She immediately tried to pull away.

"I don't need your help," she said.

Although more aware, the alcohol still made it difficult for her to stand. She stumbled and almost fell.

Brandon quickly grabbed her, pulling her back into his arms. "Stop it. Let me take you home."

Valarie tried to push him away, but her drunken body wouldn't cooperate. She had no strength to fight back and could only let him pull her toward the car.

Once inside, she didn't resist anymore, knowing she wasn't going to escape. She just sat as far away from Brandon as possible.

Seeing her staring at him warily, Brandon raised an eyebrow and chuckled. "The car isn't that big. No matter how much you move away, we're still close enough. I can pull you into my arms with one hand." Valarie didn't answer, still keeping her distance. With her drunken gaze, she wasn't as intimidating as she thought. Instead, she looked almost cute.

Brandon bit back the urge to pinch her cheek. "Valarie, when you sober up tomorrow, we'll have a proper talk."

After being scolded by Damon earlier, he had reflected and realized he'd been a bit immature. His actions at Tom's house had been rash. Since Valarie had chosen him, he needed to trust her more. Valarie didn't respond, her eyes slowly drooping.

After a few more attempts at

conversation. Brandon furrowed his brows when he got no reply.

Valarie?" Contents

The only answer was the soft sound of snoring.

Brandon paused, then couldn't but smile. He reached over

gently pinched her cheek.

to end. FindNovel whovel

It wasn't long before they reached the Weir residence.

When the maid saw them, she quickly took Valarie from Brandon's arms. Thank you, Mr. Sumnera

take Ms. Weir back to her room. It's

late, so we won't keep you "

Brandon nodded. "She's drunk. It's best to get her some hangover food." "Understood," the maid replied.

After the door to the Weir home closed behind Brandon, he turned and left.

...

Nyla finally breathed a sigh of relief, knowing Valarie was home safe.

"Nyla, now can we sleep?" Damon asked.

"Mm," she hummed.

Damon turned off the lights, and the room was plunged into darkness.

Nyla, however, couldn't fall asleep. She tossed and turned, unable to rest.

Suddenly, Damon's hand wrapped around her waist, and his warm body pressed against hers.

Damon leaned in, his voice low and husky in her ear. "You can't sleep, can you?"

Chapter 891

Damon's warm breath brushed against Nyla's earlobe, sending a tingling sensation through her.

She pushed him away. "I can sleep just fine. I'm tired now, so stay away from me."

"Really?" Damon asked.

"Of course. Don't come any closer, it's hot," Nyla complained.

Damon chuckled. "Weren't you complaining about the cold last night? And now you're saying it's hot? Looks like you're just done once you're done with me."

Nyla was speechless. The reason she felt cold last night was that they had forgotten to close the window.

As she remained silent, Damon leaned in closer. "Nyla, it's been a few days since we "

"Not interested tonight," she cut him off.

Damon fell silent.

"Alright, go to sleep," Nyla urged.

Damon sighed and lay back down quietly.

...

As soon as Damon arrived at the office the next morning, Spencer knocked and entered with a file.

"Mr. Sumner, here's the report for the two samples you asked for earlier," Spencer said.

Damon took the report and opened it. It confirmed that Nyla and Harrison indeed shared a biological connection, ruling out any involvement between the Jaystons and Drake.

"Mr. Sumner, Mr. Genge has arranged a meeting with the Sumner Group's biggest client this morning. He's probably planning to make a move against us," Spencer instructed. Damon raised an eyebrow. "Trying to steal our major client isn't easy. He must have another agenda."

Spencer looked confused. "What other agenda?"

"Don't worry about it. Just focus on monitoring whether he's contacting anyone abroad. If he is, let me know immediately," Damon instructed.

"Understood, Mr. Sumner," Spencer replied.

After Spencer left, Damon dialed Brandon's number.

"Did you hear about Tom meeting with the Sumner Group's biggest client today?" he asked.

"I heard. I'm on my way there now," Brandon replied, his voice serious and tone unpleasant.

"Do you think he can steal the Sumner Group's client?" Damon asked.

There was a pause before Brandon replied, "He probably can't."

"Then why are you on your way?" Damon pressed.

"I'm just being cautious," Brandon answered.

Damon frowned. "What you should be doing now is figuring out why he wants to meet with the Sumner Group's major client."

"He wants to steal the client from us," Brandon replied.

"I heard you had a fight with him at the bar last night?" Damon asked.

"Yeah, Uncle Damon, do you think he isn't trying to steal the business but is just trying to send me a warning?" Brandon asked.

Damon lightly tapped his fingers on the table. "What do you think?"

"I think he's trying to create the illusion that he's after our business, making me waste time keeping the client. But his real target is... Valarie," Brandon analyzed. "Think about it. I need to work now," Damon said, hanging up.

If Brandon couldn't even see through such a simple plan, he would still have a lot to learn. This was a good opportunity for him to be tested, especially now that Tom had returned.

Damon made a decision with that thought in mind.

At noon, when Nyla came up to join him for lunch, Damon casually brought up the topic of Valarie and Brandon. "Do you think Valarie and Brandon are really suited for each other?"

Nyla paused while picking up her food, then looked up at him. "Why are you bringing them up all of a sudden?"

"I was thinking about last night's

situation. I think a more mature man would be better for Valarie. Brandon is still too young. If she doesn't

mind, can introduce her to

someone else," Damon suggested.

Hearing this, Nyla couldn't help but laugh. "You want to introduce a boyfriend to Valarie? Are you sure about that?"

Chapter 892

After all, Brandon was his nephew-wasn't he being a bit too obvious about trying to set someone up with his nephew's girlfriend? Damon nodded confidently. "I'm sure."

"I can tell that Valarie likes Brandon a lot. Otherwise, she wouldn't have gone drinking just because of him. But fine, you can pass him on to me. If Brandon doesn't treat her well, I'll introduce her to someone else," Nyla said. "No." Damon flatly refused.

"Why not?" Nyla asked..

"If I could, I'd delete all the male contacts in your phone, so there's no way I'd be introducing you to anyone new," Damon stated.

Nyla was rendered speechless. She shot him a look and then turned her attention back to her meal, ignoring him.

After lunch, Damon had to attend a meeting, and Nyla went downstairs.

Later that afternoon...

While Nyla was working in the lab, she suddenly received a call from the hospital.

"Ms. Kinsey, your father fell down the stairs. You need to come to the hospital immediately," the hospital staff urged.

...

Nyla rushed to the hospital.

Harrison was simply waiting for his consent forms for surgery to be signed. With trembling hands, she signed the papers and then asked the nurse about Harrison's condition.

The nurse shook her head. "I don't know the details either. We'll know more after the surgery."

"Alright..." Nyla nodded.

Soon after, Damon arrived.

Seeing Nyla's pale face, he comforted her, "Nyla, don't worry. He'll be fine."

"Mm, but I'm still scared..." Nyla muttered.

"Don't be scared. I'll stay with you," Damon reassured.

Time passed slowly until the door to the operating room finally opened and the doctor walked out.

"The surgery went well, but the patient is older, and his bones are more fragile. They broke easily. It'll take a while to heal, and the fractured area might take over a year to fully recover," the doctor informed.

Nyla let out a sigh of relief. "Okay, I understand. Thank you, doctor."

Not long after, Harrison was wheeled out.

Seeing his eyes closed and his pale face, Nyla felt a pang.

If only she hadn't agreed to let him live alone when he had asked for it-if she had insisted on him staying with them, maybe this wouldn't have happened.

A wave of guilt swept over her.

Noticing her emotions, Damon gently pulled her into his arms and whispered, "Nyla, some things are beyond our control. Don't blame yourself." "Mm," she hummed.

The nurse transferred Harrison to a hospital room and gave some aftercare instructions before leaving.

Nyla stayed by his bedside for a while, making sure he was stable before she finally felt some relief.

She turned to tell Damon, "There's so much going on at the company. You should go back to work. I'll stay here with him."

"It's fine. I'll stay here with you. The work can wait until tomorrow," Damon said.

They sat together in the hospital hallway, neither of them speaking.

An hour or so later...

Harrison woke up.

Nyla quickly called the nurse over.

After the nurse checked on him, she instructed, "He can't eat or drink for the next six hours. After that, he can start with liquids." "Okay," Nyla replied.

After the nurse left, Nyla sat down next to the bed. "Dad, how do you feel? Does your wound hurt?"

"It doesn't," Harrison answered.

Seeing that Harrison seemed to be okay, Nyla asked, "You're usually so careful when walking. How did you suddenly fall down the stairs?"

A hint of unease flickered in

Harrison's eyes. "Wren came to see me today. I told her to leave, but she refused. We got into a bit of a push and pull, and I accidentally fell down the stairs."

Chapter 893

Upon hearing this, Nyla frowned. "She actually went to harass you after everything that happened?"

Earlier, when she had arrived, she hadn't seen Wren at all. If not for Wren, Harrison wouldn't have fallen down the stairs. Yet, Wren hadn't even bothered to check on him! Harrison remained silent for a moment before softly replying, "This is still my fault. She can't be blamed."

Nyla couldn't suppress her anger at his words. "How can you not blame her? If she hadn't gone to find you, you wouldn't have fallen down the stairs. You're already so old, and now you have to suffer like this! I'm not letting this go." Without hesitation, she pulled out her phone to call the police.

Harrison tried to stop her, but the effects of the anesthesia hadn't worn off, and he lacked the strength to stop her.

"Nyla, don't call the police..." he murmured.

Upon seeing Harrison's trembling hand, Nyla's gaze grew colder. "She made you fall down the stairs, and when you were undergoing surgery, she wasn't even there. Are you really just going to pretend nothing happened?"

"I fell down the stairs on my own. Even if you call the police, we won't gain anything. She's backed by the Wilkies now, and I don't want you to offend them because of me," Harrison explained.

Nyla tightened her grip on her phone. If it were just her, she wouldn't hesitate to offend the Wilkies. But now, with Damon in her life, her actions reflected on him as well. Damon had business dealings with the Wilkies, and she didn't want to cause trouble for

him. As she hesitated, wondering whether to resolve this privately with Wren, Damon took her hand and said, "Nyla, don't worry about anything. Do what you think is right. I'll always stand by you."

Looking into Damon's warm and reassuring eyes, Nyla felt a wave of emotion. "Damon, thank you!"

"This situation may blow up, but that's a good thing. If it gets out, Wren won't dare to bother your father again. Besides, we've already offended the Wilkies. We have nothing to lose by doing this

Damon explained.

"Okay." Nyla nodded and called the police.

After reviewing the surveillance footage outside Harrison's door, the police confirmed that there had been a scuffle between him and Wren.

They immediately contacted Wren, asking her to come to the station to make a statement. Harrison's statement was taken directly in the hospital room.

As a family member, Nyla had to follow the police to the station.

When they arrived, Nyla spotted Gabriel sitting in the waiting area. Her eyes instantly turned cold.

Gabriel noticed her and immediately walked over. "Nyla, I've already asked my mom about your father's fall. It was an accident. She was too anxious and didn't know what to do, so she called an ambulance and left."

Nyla's expression remained icy. "If

she hadn't gone to see my dad, he wouldn't have fallen down the stairs. And why did she even go to see him in the first place? Wasn't it for the money from the demolition of that apartment?

"All the money my dad spent on you and your mom wasn't enough, so now that she's a rich woman, she comes back to suck more from him?"

Gabriel's expression changed, his

eyes filled with disbelief. "Nyla, how

can you say that about me and my mom? Yes, your father has spent a lot on us, but after you fell into the sea, I've been paying for his medical expenses, and my mom has been taking care of him. Does everything we've done mean nothing to you?"

Chapter 894

"I never said you didn't contribute, but your mother kept bothering my dad after the divorce and caused him to fall down the stairs. We need to settle this once and for all." Nyla's voice was icy as she glared at Gabriel.

If it hadn't been for Wren stirring things up back then, Nyla wouldn't have had such a strained relationship with her father.

Now, even though they were divorced, Wren still greedily wanted the demolition compensation. Wasn't that shameless?

Gabriel clenched his fists. His eyes filled with sorrow as he met her gaze. "This incident was indeed my mom's fault. I'll apologize on her behalf, and she will go to the hospital to apologize to your father. As for his medical and nutritional expenses, I will take full responsibility."

Nyla's expression remained stern. "That's what you should do, and I won't let her off easily. I've handed the footage to the police. If my dad was pushed by her, I'll definitely press charges!"

Her tone was resolute, offering no room for negotiation.

Gabriel fell silent for a moment, then quietly said, "Don't worry. If my mom really did it on purpose, I won't protect her."

Nyla didn't believe him not at all. After all, Wren was his mother, and it was clear where his loyalties lay.

"You better mean what you say," she replied sharply.

Not wanting to continue the conversation, Nyla turned and walked past him, heading back to handle the police procedures.

Soon, only Gabriel and Damon were left in the hall. The two exchanged glances of mutual disdain, the tension between them palpable.

Gabriel couldn't be bothered to greet Damon and simply turned to leave.

Once the procedures were complete, Nyla approached Damon. "Let's go. We just need to wait for the police to notify us about the rest."

"Mm," Damon hummed in response.

Noticing her furrowed brow, he reached over and gently smoothed the creases. "Don't worry. I'll make sure your dad is taken care of. When you have time, you can visit him."

Nyla considered it but didn't reject the offer. After all, she wasn't a professional and wouldn't be able to care for him as well as a nurse could.

She nodded.

The two left the police station and quickly drove away.

As Gabriel watched their black Cayenne disappear into the distance, his eyes darkened, a malicious glint flashing in them.

More than half an hour later...

Wren finally emerged from the police station, her face dark with frustration.

She got into Gabriel's car and vented

angrily, "What do those police think

they're doing? Treating me like a criminal? I've already told them. countless times I didn't push him, yet they kept questioning me over and over!"

After her outburst, she realized Gabriel had been silent, his face grim.

She felt a bit intimidated by him now. Since his return from overseas, she had found him harder to read. Sometimes, just one cold look from him made her uneasy.

Although he had generally been good to her, his mood swings were unpredictable. Today, however, he seemed genuinely upset.

"Gabriel, what's wrong? Did someone upset you?" Wren asked.

Before Nyla arrived, Wren had been inside giving her statement. By the time Wren was out, Nyla had already left, so she hadn't realized Gabriel

had met her at the police station.

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Gabriel's dark gaze settled on Wren, and she suddenly felt as if she were being watched by a snake. A chill ran down her spine.

"Gabriel... Why are you looking at me like that?" she stammered, her voice faltering with nervousness.

Chapter 895

"Are you sure you didn't push Harrison?" Gabriel asked.

Meeting his questioning gaze, Wren frowned. "No, I told you already, didn't I? You don't believe me?"

During their struggle, Harrison had simply fallen by accident. She had already been questioned multiple times by the police. Now, after finally leaving the station, she had to deal with her son's doubts. Not seeing any signs of dishonesty, Gabriel started the car and coldly said, "I'll take you home."

...

Gabriel dropped Wren off at the entrance. Before she could step out of the car, his icy voice came again. "Apart from apologizing, don't ever go to Harrison again. If you need money, I'll give it to you." Wren paused with her hand on the door, her expression shifting.

After a long silence, she replied, "This is my business. You don't need to worry about it."

Her words completely ignited Gabriel's anger, and the temperature in the car dropped significantly.

"Every time you go shopping, you spend more than what the demolition compensation from Harrison's apartment would give you. Why do you keep going back to him?" he demanded.

Wren froze, her face darkening.

"It's none of your business," she replied and pushed the car door open, preparing to leave.

Gabriel's cold voice came from behind, heavy with warning. "Since you chose to divorce him and marry into a wealthy family, there's no turning back. Don't make things worse. The Wilkies won't go easy on you."

A wealthy family like the Wilkies wouldn't show mercy to a woman who had been married three times and wasn't loyal to her husband.

Although Gabriel could protect Wren, he didn't want her to return to Harrison. If that happened, it would ruin his chances with Nyla.

"I know what I'm doing. You don't need to remind me," Wren said, slamming the car door and turning to walk into the villa.

Since Wren married Jane's uncle, opportunities for her to meet Gabriel had become fewer. They mostly saw each other at major Wilkie events, and even then, there was little to discuss. en FindNovel

After Wren disappeared from view, Gabriel drove away.

...

Nyla received a call from Ruby while on her way home with Damon.

"Nyla, there's an issue with some data in the lab, and it looks like we'll need to stay late to redo it," Ruby said.

Nyla asked which data set was problematic and, after thinking for a moment, replied, "Alright, I'll head there soon."

Once the call ended, she noticed the displeased look on Damon's face beside her.

She turned to him, meeting his slightly cold gaze, and instinctively asked, "What's wrong?"

"You're already exhausted. The most important thing now is to go home and rest, not go back to the lab to work on experiments," Damon replied.

"That data set is urgent. If we don't

fix it, it will delay the next

experiments. Plus, I'm staying late to keep the drug development on track. As the boss, shouldn't you be happy seeing your employees working overtime?" Nyla asked.

"I don't encourage employees working overtime. If they can't finish their work during regular hours and need to stay late, they aren't the right fit for Prospectus Technology," Damon stated flatly.

His expression was cold, his words blunt.

Nyla raised an eyebrow. "So... does this mean you're going to fire me, Mr. Sumner?"

"You're not an employee of Prospectus Technology, so I have no authority to fire you," he replied. Seeing his still grim expression, Nyla leaned in and kissed his cheek.

#Chapter 896

Chapter 896

The moment Nyla's lips touched Damon's face, his usually calm eyes flickered. It was like a stone was dropped into a calm lake, creating ripples that wouldn't settle for a long time.

"Alright, don't be upset. Ruby also needs to stay late, and you're always staying up late with documents too, right?" Nyla coaxed.

Just as she was pulling away, her waist was suddenly gripped, and she was pulled back into Damon's embrace.

Then... things escalated quickly.

As Nyla got kissed, every sense seemed to vanish, leaving only the overwhelming sensation of their lips pressed together. She felt like a small boat in the middle of a storm, clutching Damon's shirt to keep from being swept away. It felt like forever before Damon released her lips.

Her once pale lips were now slightly swollen, glistening with moisture. They looked almost like cherries in bloom, as if they still carried the scent of sweetness.

Seeing Damon staring at her lips with dark, intense eyes, Nyla hastily pushed him away and retreated from his embrace.

She couldn't help but feel uneasy. The way he looked at her was like a predator eyeing its prey, and she feared he might devour her at any moment.

She quickly moved as far away from him as possible, wary he might act impulsively again.

Noticing her defensive posture, Damon couldn't help but smile, his voice low. "Don't worry. I won't do anything inappropriate in the car."

Nyla was speechless. Was what just happened not inappropriate?

She could hardly catch her breath, and her lips were still tingling. She didn't trust Damon's assurances one bit.

"Take me to the office," she ordered.

Damon nodded. "Alright."

Surprised at how easily he agreed, Nyla raised an eyebrow.

Damon's smile deepened. "After you just used a kiss to charm me, wouldn't I seem heartless if I didn't agree?"

Nyla was exasperated. When had she ever charmed him? That kiss was just to calm him down, alright?

Still, she didn't feel like explaining. Who knew if Damon would change his mind halfway through?

When the car stopped at Prospectus Technology's building and Nyla

opened the door to leave, she

as

taken aback as Damon followed her

of the car.

"You're getting out too?" she asked.

"You're staying late to work on experiments, right? I'm going to the office to look at some files while I wait for you," he replied.

Seeing the matter-of-fact look on Damon's face, Nyla was speechless.

"I might be working late, so I'm not sure when I'll finish. You don't have to stay with me," she said.

"I have files to look through anyway. If you're not done when it gets too late, I'll leave first," he reassured her.

As he spoke, Damon had already stepped toward the building.

Nyla was about to argue, but he seemed to anticipate her objection. He cut her off, "If you keep trying to stop me, you won't be going to work,

and we're going back now to

Hearing this, Nyla wisely kept her mouth shut and followed him into the building.

When they reached the elevator, Damon pressed the button for her floor, then told her, "If you're too tired, just rest. Don't push yourself."

From his angle, he could clearly see

Nyla's delicate beauty. All the

thoughts he had been trying to suppress came rushing back, tightening his throat and making his mouth dry. They had both been so busy lately, and he had been holding himself back for a while.

Nyla had no idea what he was thinking. She just nodded and said, "I know. You should head home early, too. Buddy's still at home."

Chapter 897

Although Mason was usually quite independent, he was still a child. He'd probably get scared when his parents weren't home.

"Mm, I know," Damon replied.

While they were talking, the elevator reached Nyla's floor.

"I'm heading to the lab," Nyla said.

"Okay, message me when you're almost done," Damon reminded her.

"Sure." Nyla nodded, quickly stepped out of the elevator, and disappeared around the corner.

By the time she arrived at the lab, Ruby had already set up the experiment.

Nyla glanced at her notebook, jotting down a few potential issues that could complicate the experiment, and then began the process again with Ruby.

The two of them were so focused that several hours passed before they realized it was close to midnight.

Fortunately, the experiment was successful this time, and the data came out as expected, leaving them both relieved. If the experiment had failed, they would probably have had to stay up all night in the lab.

After finishing, Nyla and Ruby tidied up the lab and left. On their way to the elevator, Nyla sent Damon a message to let him know they were done.

Damon replied quickly.

Damon: [Got it. I'll wait for you on the first floor.]

Nyla: [Okay.]

She put her phone away and glanced at Ruby, who was also typing a reply.

Not wanting to invade Ruby's

privacy, Nyla quickly turned her gaze away, but her sharp eyesight caught

the name of the person Rubaught

messaging-Sullivan.

was

Nyla bit her lip but didn't remind Ruby that Sullivan was no saint. After all, Ruby was an adult and could distinguish right from wrong.

Nyla had already warned her a few times as Ruby's senior, and that was enough. Saying too much would be interfering in Ruby's personal life.

Ruby was indeed replying to

Sullivan's text, but her responses et

were brief, almost cold. It seemed

Sullivan hadn't noticed, as he continued messaging her.

His last message asked why she wasn't asleep yet. She couldn't be bothered to reply, so she simply closed the chat.

She turned to Nyla. "Sorry for keeping you late today, Nyla. It was my mistake that we had to work overtime."

Nyla shook her head. "It's my fault,

too. If weren't for my dad needing my signature for the surgery paperwork, I wouldn't have rushed out and caused problems with the

experiment."

A flicker of something crossed Ruby's gaze. If she had been more competent, the experiment wouldn't have fallen apart as soon as Nyla left.

She changed the topic. "Nyla, are you hungry? Want to grab a bite?"

Nyla shook her head. "No, I'm a bit tired. Go ahead, I'll cover it."

"If you're not going, then I won't either. What's the point of eating alone?" Ruby replied.

The two of them entered the elevator, which quickly descended to the first floor.

As soon as they stepped out, Nyla spotted Damon's tall figure nearby. She walked up quickly, surprised. "Have you been waiting long?"

"No, I just got here," Damon answered.

Nyla turned to Ruby. "Ruby, we'll take you home. It's too late, and it's not safe to walk alone at night."

Chapter 898

Ruby shook her head. "No need. I live close to the company and the main road, so there are still plenty of people around at this hour. I'll be fine."

Nyla didn't insist, nodding. "Alright, message me when you get home."

"Will do," Ruby replied.

After that, Nyla and Damon quickly got into the car and left, while Ruby turned to head home. Just as she neared her house, she suddenly received a call from Sullivan. "Aren't you home yet?" Sullivan asked.

Ruby, not used to his overly familiar tone, frowned. "I'm on my way home. Thanks for your concern, Sullivan, but is there something else you need?"

Sullivan, unfazed by her cold tone, kept his voice gentle as always. "Be careful on the road. Let me know when you get home."

Ruby took a deep breath before replying, "Sullivan, I thought I made myself clear last time. I really appreciate you saving me twice, but my feelings for you are nothing more than gratitude."

Sullivan had heard this rejection so many times that he didn't take offense. "Ruby, why not give us a chance? If, in the end, you can't develop feelings for me, I'll let you go."

"There's no point in trying something that won't work," Ruby replied.

Besides, he wasn't the type of person she liked.

They both grew up in families that didn't offer much love, like two hedgehogs bristling at the slightest threat. Being together would only cause them to hurt each other, and she didn't want to waste time on that. "You don't know it won't work," Sullivan said, his voice persistent.

Ruby lowered her eyes, speaking slowly. "Sullivan, people who grow up without love don't have extra love to give. Loving themselves is already difficult enough.

"I don't want us to hurt each other, and you came close to me for other reasons at first, didn't you?"

In the lab, Tina and Demi were more attractive and lively than she was. Why would Sullivan notice someone like her, with no shining qualities?

There was silence on the other end of the line.

Ruby was about to hang up when

Sullivan's voice suddenly came through again. "Ruby, I won't deny it, when I first approached you, I did have other motives. But after

learning that you've had similar experiences, I became drawn to your resilience.

"I can promise you now, I really like you. It's not for any other reason, but because I truly care for you."

His tone was sincere, and for a moment, Ruby imagined him standing before her, looking at her as he said those words. She clenched her phone tightly.

After a long pause, she replied slowly, "But I don't like you. Please stop liking me."

With that, she hung up. Turning it to silent, she tucked it into her bag and began walking.

She had long gotten used to being alone. She wasn't afraid of loneliness. In fact, she had become accustomed to it. But when she heard Sullivan's words, they still moved her, and her heart skipped a beat.

It was only a momentary flutter.

She and Sullivan were too alike-similar childhoods, similar experiences, which had shaped similar stubborn personalities. Two people so alike could never work together.

Sullivan slowly put down his phone and stared out the window. After being rejected time and time again by Ruby, his patience was running thin.

In the hospital room...

Just then, his phone rang. He looked at the screen with anticipation, but his expression darkened when he saw who was calling.

Chapter 899

As soon as the call connected, Rebecca's hysterical voice cut through the line. "Sullivan, when are you going to make your move?!"

Since Nathaniel had discovered her relationship with Drake, he had been abusing her whenever things went wrong. She could no longer bear it. She had secretly transferred some of Nathaniel's money and planned to leave as soon as Sullivan acted. Hearing the breakdown in Rebecca's voice, Sullivan remained expressionless. "It'll be soon. Don't worry."

"Soon, soon! You always say that to brush me off! I don't think you plan on doing anything to Nyla at all! Fine, if that's the case, I won't show any mercy either. Get ready for everyone to find out about the bribes you've been taking!" Rebecca threatened. Without waiting for Sullivan to respond, she hung up.

Sullivan gripped his phone, his face darkening with anger. Since Rebecca had dared to threaten him repeatedly, he would no longer hold back.

Taking a deep breath, he immediately sent an anonymous email to Nathaniel, attaching evidence of Rebecca's illegal transfer of his funds.

Nathaniel was working in his study when he suddenly heard a notification for a new email. He opened it, and within moments, his expression darkened.

...

He pulled out his phone and instructed his secretary to investigate.

As expected, they discovered that Rebecca had secretly transferred a substantial amount of money from his company.

He had believed that keeping her away from the company for the past few years would prevent her from causing harm. But to his shock, she had already colluded with several shareholders behind his back.

Without the anonymous email, he likely wouldn't have uncovered the theft until it was too late-after they had moved all the company's funds.

Nathaniel's eyes burned with fury as he stood up and strode toward the bedroom.

Inside, Rebecca was busy organizing evidence of Sullivan accepting bribes from various pharmaceutical projects when the door suddenly slammed open. She was so startled that her phone fell to the floor.

She looked up, her gaze locking with Nathaniel's cold, furious eyes, and she trembled.

"N-Nathaniel... you-Ah!" Before she could finish, Nathaniel swiftly closed the distance between them and seized her by the throat.

The choking sensation overtook Rebecca, and fear surged through her chest. Nathaniel's expression was terrifying-she had never seen him look at her with such intensity.

"Nat... Nathaniel..." she gasped.

As her lungs emptied, the world around her blurred, and her head buzzed. Instinctively, she began to strike Nathaniel's arm, but it was futile. His grip was like iron, leaving her no chance of escape.

Gradually, her strength faded, and she could no longer resist. Just as she was about to lose consciousness, he suddenly released her.

Rebecca crumpled to the floor, her body limp like a ragdoll. As air rushed back into her lungs, it stung like needles, and she coughed uncontrollably.

Nathaniel stood over her, his eyes devoid of warmth, looking down at her as if she were an insignificant insect.

"Rebecca, you've been scheming behind my back, transferring the company's money, and you thought I wouldn't know? So this is what you're capable of?" he growled.

His words were as cold as ice, each one cutting deeper than the last.

Rebecca stopped coughing and looked up at him in disbelief.

Chapter 900

How did Nathaniel know?!

Rebecca thought she had been so careful. There was no way he could have found out.

Then, suddenly, she remembered Sullivan.

She had just spoken to him on the phone, and now Nathaniel knew about her moving the company's money. It couldn't be a coincidence.

It must have been Sullivan-that ungrateful bastard.

But there was no time to think about how to deal with him. The priority now was to beg Nathaniel for forgiveness.

Suppressing her fear, she clung to his leg. "Nathaniel, I know I was wrong. I did it because I was afraid you'd suddenly want to divorce me... I was so scared... Please, just let me go, I promise I'll never-" Before she could finish, Nathaniel kicked her away.

The kick landed on her chest, and she screamed in pain. Her head slammed into the edge of the bed, and she nearly passed out from the blow, cold sweat dripping down her face. Nathaniel, however, didn't seem to notice her pain. His expression remained unchanged.

He squatted down and grabbed her chin, squeezing hard as he spoke slowly, his voice icy. "Looks like I've been too kind to you lately. So kind that you forgot who you really are." He squeezed her chin so tightly it felt as if he might crush it.

Seeing Rebecca frown in pain, Nathaniel sneered. "From today on, you'll get a taste of real hell."

His expression was so terrifying that it made Rebecca's soul tremble.

"No... No, what are you going to do..." she gasped.

Escape! That was the only thought in her mind now.

Terrified, she shoved him away and tried to run. Before she could reach the door, he yanked her back by her hair.

"Ah!" she screamed in fear as he pulled her back into the bedroom.

The door slammed shut behind her, and her expression twisted into one of madness and despair.

Nathaniel threw Rebecca onto the bed and took off his belt. Without a word, he swung it down onto her.

The sound of the belt hitting her flesh was muffled, but the swish it made slicing through the air betrayed the force he was using.

Rebecca didn't beg for mercy as she

used to. Instead, she laughed hysterically. "Go ahead, hit me! You might as well kill me! What else can you do other than beat women? You're useless!"

Nathaniel's eyes darkened, becoming monstrous, as if he were about to devour her with his gaze.

"Say that again!" he barked.

Rebecca looked at him with a sneer. She knew that no amount of begging would make him spare her, so she stopped pretending.

"I called you useless! Do you know why I chose you in the first place? Because you're the dumbest! I could drop a few tears in front of you, and you'd believe anything, willingly becoming my dog to deal with Nyla.

"You're so stupid, it's no wonder Damon is going after the Preston Group! Useless!" she screamed.

With every word, Nathaniel's eyes grew colder.

Finally, he smiled—a chilling one that sent a shiver down Rebecca's spine. "Rebecca, I'm going to make you wish you were dead."

He tossed the belt aside and slowly approached her.

Seeing his calm, almost emotionless expression, Rebecca felt a deep fear grip her heart. "What... are you going to do?" "You'll find out soon enough," he answered.

Nathaniel grabbed her by the hair

and dragged her like a doll into the living room. The sharp pain in her scalp only heightened her sense of

dread.

