

Unbreakable 2171

Chapter 2171

Jarrold hesitated before deflecting. You must have misheard. It wasn't time to broach the topic of her mother since more pressing matters demanded attention.

Nicole accepted his evasion with a passive gaze fixed on the ceiling.

With no expectations, misconceptions were easy to embrace.

I want to see Roscoe. I'm worried about him, Nicole insisted.

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He's fine, Jarrold replied curtly, his irritation palpable. The doctors have tended to him, and Roscoe's family is with him now.

Nicole's agitation was evident as her fingers curled. You informed the Watts family!

The Watts won't pose a threat to him anymore. Quite the opposite, they're determined to protect him, Jarrold explained.

Nicole looked puzzled. How so?

Pouring a glass of water, Jarrold handed it to her, elaborating, A direct heir of the Watts family recently perished in a car accident, along with his five-year-old son. With Roscoe now the sole heir, they're eager to safeguard him.

Nicole remained unconvinced. Could Roscoe's father, known for his ruthlessness, truly care about Roscoe? In that cutthroat environment, Roscoe's value would diminish should another heir emerge.

Seeming to sense her skepticism, Jarrold continued, The Watts now cherish him. They've spared no expense, hiring top-notch doctors for his rehabilitation. Have you heard of the Xstar project? It's a ten-billion-dollar initiative for bone regeneration, and the Watts have invested in it for Roscoe. If Roscoe agrees, he could undergo surgery there. In six months, his hands and feet will be as good as new. He's a doctor, isn't he? After the treatment, he could return to surgery, even run a marathon if he desires.

Jarrold's point was clear. Roscoe had the option of treatment, but it came with a sacrifice.

Nicole grasped Jarrold's implication. He wanted her to convince Roscoe to leave her and seek treatment abroad. I won't meddle in Roscoe's decisions. Whether he chooses treatment or not, I'll honor his choice, she asserted calmly.

Do you want him to live with a disability because of you? Jarrold's tone carried a simmering anger. Perhaps you're unaware, but his leg is already deformed. He feigns normalcy in your presence, enduring the pain.

Jarrold's smirk held a cruel edge. Nicole, are you truly willing to crush his aspirations, to confine him in the need of a crutch for your sake?

Suddenly, Nicole remembered having asked Roscoe on a snowy day if he had any regrets. He was after all, unable to pursue medicine, to wield the scalpel and save Lives anymore.

At that time, Roscoe had gazed at Nicole with eyes full of warmth, smiling as he said, Curing the sick and

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saving lives was never really my dream. I dont have such grand ambitions. I initially pursued medicine just to be near you. It was my only way to reach you. I believed I had to become a great doctor, to stand by your side, care for your loved ones and your children, and most importantly, you.

At the thought of this, Nicole replied briefly to Jarrod, Not everyone is like you. Some peoples dreams are small and simple. They just want to spend a lifetime with someone special, safe, and healthy through the changing seasons.

Oh? Really? Jarrod responded with a cold sneer, Isnt the future I envisioned also worthwhile?

Youre better off alone for life because youre cold-hearted, emotionless, and selfish.

Jarrod seemed unaffected by Nicoles harsh words. He had always been that type of person, naturally detached from emotional entanglements since birth. And Nicole was like a kite that had slipped from his fingers. Someone Like him wouldnt let anything he had marked stray from its intended path.

A lifetime with just one person, safe and healthy through the seasons.

Such a dream was laughable to him.

Both were lost in their own thoughts within the confines of the hospital ward.

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Underneath Jarrods outward calm, a storm was raging within. He waited until he had enough sway before stating his demands. It was clear that the elderly Dora, whose vitality was weakening, wasnt sufficient for him to trap Nicole by his side. Moreover, Doras health was more dangerous than Nicoles, and she might not last more than a few years. He needed to secure something more enduring, something more firmly under his control.

Nicole knew clearly that if they became entangled once more, the outcome would likely not be good. She had some regrets. She should have married Roscoe earlier. Roscoe had done so much for her, and the least she could do was spare him further regrets.

Just then, Jarrods phone rang. After taking the call, his face turned serious.

He then came back into the ward and told Nicole, Rest well. Ill come see you later.

Nicole remained silent, acting as if she hadnt heard him.

Jarrod, not completely reassured, left her in the care of two nurses and warned, Nicole, dont try to run. You know you cant escape. Its better if you are obedient. Well settle our accounts slowly.

He left a suffocating message before leaving. I will make you agree willingly.

Nicole stared blankly up at the ceiling.

When it was time to eat, the nurse came to feed her, and she obediently took her meal. She knew she couldn't afford to weaken her condition further. Before she could see Roscoe again, she decided to conserve her strength.

Jarrold handpicked the nurse, a woman in her forties, who bore a resemblance to Dora in her features.

Therefore, Nicole had always treated the nurse courteously, seeing her as a mother figure.

Miss Lawrence, you ate well today. Mr. Schultz will be glad to hear that, the nurse remarked cheerfully as she tidied up the bowl.

Do you really need to report back to him about my meals? Nicole asked softly.

Yes, he insists we report everything, no matter how unimportant.

Nicole chuckled lightly. Does he also need to know how many times I use the restroom each day?

Well Mr. Schultz is just very concerned about you. The nurse noticed Nicole's bad mood and assumed she was upset. After all, nobody enjoyed feeling confined.

Miss Lawrence, it's clear Mr. Schultz really cares about you. The nurse, eager to please, praised Jarrold. When you were unconscious, Mr. Schultz was right there by your side, not stepping away even once.

Nicole responded with a pathetic smile, If I were to die, he would just lose his toy.

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This remark made the nurse's heart sink. Nicole was stunning, her beauty undiminished even in illness. It was disheartening to hear her sound so defeated.

The nurse, who had only a son and no daughters, felt a maternal affection for Nicole and tried to offer some comfort. Miss Lawrence, living together means making compromises. It's not just about his flaws. Try to see his good sides.

Nicole responded distrustfully, His good sides?

The nurse nodded affirmatively. Yes, you should have seen how worried he was when you wouldn't wake up. A man who truly doesn't care wouldn't have shown such concern. Some men appear tough on the outside but are soft at heart. If you focus more on the positive, life might become sweeter, and who knows, your health might even start to improve.

But he doesn't have any good sides Nicole whispered, her voice tinged with sorrow. I can't find anything good about him. I wish he were dead.

The nurse hesitated to continue the conversation, shocked by the sentiment. How had this seemingly perfect match come to wish death upon each other?

If he were gone, things might be better Nicole muttered.

The nurse squeezed Nicoles hand tighter and looked around. The other nurse who was supposed to relieve her was busy washing dishes, and the bodyguards outside seemed unaware. She lowered her voice and advised, Miss, please dont talk like that. Being kinder can make life more bearable.

This nurse had a compassionate heart. Jarrod had instructed both nurses to report every detail, no matter how minor. Yet, moved by Nicoles pale complexion, this nurse felt a surge of empathy for Nicole. As long as her colleague was absent, she decided not to relay Nicoles unfavorable remarks.

Miss, if youre feeling tired, you should rest. Do not utter those words, alright? the nurse gently advised Nicole.

Perhaps it was the nurses kind behavior that reminded Nicole of her mother, she looked at the nurse with soft eyes and murmured an agreeable okay.

Just then, the other nurse entered the room. The compassionate nurse quickly withdrew her hand from Nicoles and reverted to a professional detachment, attending to her duties.

Nicole lay back, her gaze fixed on the ceiling, counting the days and pondering when Jarrod would act next. What methods would he use this time It seemed like there wasnt much left binding her to him

At the Hampton family residence. Vicki still carried a strong smell of blood. Her wrists had been treated by the family doctor.

She had recently attempted to slit her wrists.

Luckily, the attempt was discovered promptly, and there was no threat to her life.

It wasnt deemed appropriate for her to go to the hospital, as such matters should remain out of the public eye.

Vickis wedding with Jarrod was getting closer. If the media caught wind of it, there would definitely be a lot of speculation. This would undoubtedly impact both families.

Wayne summoned Jarrod over to ask about what had transpired. He had tried to get information from Vicki, but she remained silent.

Jarrod paused before responding, Ill handle it.

Wayne stopped him with a reminder. Jarrod, do you still remember the promise you made to me?

Observing Jarrods silence, Wayne spoke up. I was initially hesitant about Vicki marrying you because, frankly, you dont love her. She insisted so persistently that I eventually had no choice but to give in. Jarrod, remember, the Hampton family has treated you well. When no one else was willing to take a chance on you, we did. Vicki is the child of the woman I love the most, so Ive

always poured her with affection. Vicki resembles her mother in appearance and personality. Both prioritize emotions above all else, which is why I only asked for one promise from you back then.

With a meaningful look, Wayne added, You must not do anything wrong.

Jarrold responded solemnly, Dont worry. I havent forgotten.

Thats good to hear. Wayne patted Jarrold on the shoulder, continuing, A man in your position will inevitably meet many women in social circles. Vickis mother used to create quite a fuss about it, but she was easy to calm. Just make a little effort, and spoil her a bit. As long as you dont bring any of them home, having a few favorites on the side is manageable.

Wayne knew what he was talking about. He hadnt been faithful to just one woman. Understanding the nature of men, he knew there would always be memorable ones. Effort was necessary, but the status of the legal wife must remain undisturbed.

Wayne remembered how Vickis mother would fuss, yet he never allowed her to overshadow his legal wife. The same rule applied here.

Additionally, Vicki was raised directly under Bess, Waynes legal wife. With Waynes traditional views, he believed that adhering to certain protocols solidified ones legitimate place in the Hampton family.

Jarrold nodded and spoke firmly. The wedding will go on as planned, but I need a commitment from you.

Wayne stroked his beard and responded firmly, Go ahead.

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Dont harm those around me. Jarrold declared bluntly, They are mine to manage, under any circumstances.

Wayne was displeased but didnt show it. After all, there was no reason to ruin the good relationship between the two families over this.

Plus, he had been caught up in love affairs before, so he knew the drill. While things might seem exciting during the infatuation phase, they lose their sparkle after a few years. He assumed it was no biggie.

I promise you, Wayne agreed quickly.

Jarrold then went to see Vicki.

Lying in bed, Vicki looked pale and weak. She was completely different from Nicole.

Vicki had been well taken care of since childhood, and though a bit spoiled, she still had a simple mind. As a result, her current fragile state was like a delicate flower, evoking a desire in men to protect her.

However, Jarrod was not swayed by such fragility. His experiences had rendered him indifferent to women who seemed delicate and in need of protection.

Jarrod was drawn to those who were fiery, vibrant, and as captivating as a desert rose, thorny and resilient, yet strikingly beautiful.

Nicole was the only one who matched this description. She was Like a desert rose, and only the experienced traveler would understand its significance.

Feeling any better? Jarrod asked as he sat beside the bed.

Vicki turned her head away, filled with grievance and anger, refusing to talk with him. She felt as though she had offered her passionate heart, yet had not been treated well in return.

What Vicki had forgotten was that she was the one who had initiated their arrangement where Jarrod had made it clear to her that he would not love her.

People often wanted more and were rarely satisfied.

Jarrod warned, Dont act so impulsively next time. You might not always have someone around to save you. Dont place your life in someone elses hands. Its not worth it.

It was surprising to hear such words from a man usually so heartless.

Jarrods look was stern, serving both as a warning and a piece of advice to Vicki. After saying that, he

stood up and added, Get some rest. You need to be well for the wedding.

As he moved to leave, Vicki suddenly sat up and wrapped her arms around him from behind, pleading, Dont leave. Jarrod, youre so heartless. You dont even care about me, she said pitifully.

Vickis eyes were puffy from her tears. In the days since Jarrod had been gone, she had been in agony, crying endlessly. He hadnt answered her calls, responded to her lengthy texts, or even picked up when her father tried to reach him.

This was Vickis first real encounter with Jarrods coldness. When she attempted to slit her wrist, it was her way of trying to get him to return.

But as the blood began to flow, fear took over. She didnt actually want to die. She realized that death would bring only endless loneliness. Without Jarrod, she didnt want to face the void.

So she called the servants, creating a scene to get medical attention and bandaging, prompting her father to summon Jarrod in anger.

Jarrod stood unaffected, his athletic figure visible beneath his suit, clearly someone with significant influence in the game of love. He gently pushed her hand away, looked down at her, and asked, Have you come to your senses?

IT have, Jarrod. Vicki refrained from saying anything that might upset him.

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She understood the balance of gains and losses. With the wedding approaching, repeating the suicide attempt for sympathy could lead to disgust rather than compassion. Once was already pushing it. She wouldnt dare try it again.

Ill do whatever you say. Just dont leave me. Ill listen to you in everything, Vicki pleaded, her voice breathless from crying, her face wet with tears, initiating pity in anyone who saw her.

A wealthy young woman was brought down to such a condition. There wasnt a man who wouldnt feel a thing.

And Vicki, with her clean history and tendency to avoid conflicts, appeared even more sympathetic.

Jarrod was quite pleased. He patted her head and said calmly, Good.

It was late at night.

Nicole lay in her hospital bed, the room lights turned off long ago.

In the darkness, she gazed up at the ceiling, her eyes wide open.

Outwardly, she seemed perfectly calm, but internally, she was in chaos. The sense of confusion and helplessness overwhelmed her when alone.

She had to maintain a composed exterior in front of others, while internally she was tormented about how to escape her situation.

She had already attempted to break free twice, with little success.

Whether it was faking her death or trying to flee, she always found herself back where she started.

Jarrod had her on a string like a kite. With just a gentle pull, he could bring her right back. And all her attempts to fight back seemed, in retrospect, merely laughable.

Nicole bitterly thought that even fate seemed to favor him. Why? Why did life treat her so unfairly?

The door creaked open.

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The sound of familiar footsteps caused Nicoles body to tense instinctively. She quickly closed her eyes, pretending to sleep.

The footsteps stopped beside her bed.

Nicole felt as though venomous eyes were piercing into her, sending shivers down her spine.

After a tense silence, Jarrod said, Nicole, sometimes I wonder, if you really were to die, what would I do

He apparently didnt realize she was awake as he spoke these absurd words.

Then, his large hand cast a shadow over her delicate neck.

For a moment, Nicole was terrified that Jarrod had a murderous intent, that he might actually kill her.

But then, the footsteps faded away.

Nicole opened her eyes, her breathing unstable as if she had narrowly escaped an ominous threat. She couldnt remain passive. She needed to find Roscoe and attempt to reach out to the nanny responsible for Austins care once more.

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Perhaps because she was back under Jarrods control, the anxiety within her grew. She felt as if a long-concealed secret was on the verge of being revealed.

She glanced at the door. Four bodyguards stood outside, and two nurses were switching shifts inside.

On the bedside, a thermos-held honey water a nurse had prepared for her earlier. After taking a sip, an idea began to form in her mind.

Over the next few days, Jarrod was busy and didnt visit her for three straight days.

During this time, Nicole grew quite fond of a particularly compassionate nurse named Leila Hunt.

Leila was warm-hearted and sociable.

Nicole came to get close to Leila, and while Leila was caring, she was cautious, never intruding into personal matters and always speaking with tact.

Noticing that Nicole had a good appetite today, Leila carefully peeled and sliced fruits, placing them neatly on a plate before offering them to Nicole. Miss Lawrence, please try this. Alec brought them in just this morning. Ive never seen them before. He mentioned theyre imported and very good for your health.

Nicole ate half but couldnt finish them all. You can have the rest, Leila.

Leila hesitated, feeling unworthy to eat such a Luxury. These were delicacies shed never even seen before. How could she casually consume them?

Only after Nicole insisted a few times, mentioning it would spoil if left uneaten, that Leila gave in and tried them.

The fruits had a rich, creamy texture like ice cream, and Leila found them incredibly tasty, though she couldnt quite place the flavor. She wanted to take these to her child. She felt a slight guilt, knowing her child had never tasted such delicious fruits while she enjoyed them.

Noticing Leilas expression, Nicole encouraged, Leila, why dont you take some home for your child to try?

Leila quickly refused. Oh no, I couldnt. I have tasted them. I cant take them home. These were specially ordered by Mr. Schultz for you to help regain your strength.

Leilas husband worked as a driver, and together, they used their earnings to support their childs education and purchase a small apartment measuring around 6 square meters, which they had taken a loan for. It wasnt extravagant, but at least they had a place to call home now.

But the burden of the loan pressed down on Leila, forcing her to be extremely thrifty, never allowing herself a moment of rest.

Her child mostly ate apples, bananas, and pears because Leila hesitated to buy unfamiliar fruits from the store. The ones they already had were both affordable and nutritious.

In her heart, Leila wished her husband and child could taste such delicious fruits because they might never have the chance to try something so special again in their lives, apart from what their employers had gifted them.

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However, Leila held firm to her principles. She never took things from her employers household without a genuine reason, nor did she blindly accept the employers casual kindness. She had witnessed many employers who would offer things but Later gossip about her, calling her a country bumpkin lacking in sophistication.

Even though Leilas family was far from wealthy, they held their heads high with self-respect. Normal food could satisfy their hunger.

They refused to compromise their principles for a mere meal.

Leila, I genuinely respect you, Nicole reassured her. If you dont take the fruits, they will just be thrown away, and that would be such a waste.

Over the past few days, Leila had realized Nicole was unlike previous employers. Nicole was compassionate and treated the staff with kindness.

Seeing the desire in Leilas eyes, Nicole added, You know I dont have much of an appetite, and I cant eat too much fruit every day. Its a shame to throw all of this away daily. If you dont mind, please take some back for your family to enjoy.

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Jarrold had made it clear that the fruit delivered was always fresh, but the hospital rooms temperature wasnt ideal for storing it, so any leftovers at the end of the day would be thrown away.

Reflecting on it, Leila felt it was a shame to see so much fruit wasted daily.

After Nicoles genuine offer, Leila realized it would be stubborn to decline. She smiled warmly. Thank you, Miss Lawrence.

Nicole assured her it was no trouble at all.

From that moment, their relationship deepened. The next time Leila came to work, she excitedly told Nicole how her son had loved the fruits, declaring it the best hed ever had.

Leilas words were filled with a simple, infectious joy.

Nicole looked on with envy. All she had ever wanted was that simple kind of happiness.

One afternoon, when the bodyguards were away, Nicole seized the opportunity to ask Leila a favor. Leila, could you help me by delivering a message?

Who should I deliver the message to, Miss Lawrence? Leila asked.

Before her shift began, Leila was tasked with closely observing Nicoles every word and action, reporting everything back to Jarrod.

This was Alocs instruction to Leila. She didnt dare to disobey, but she would choose what to report during her shifts.

Nicole answered, My husband.

Leila was taken aback. Your husband? Then Mr. Schultz is

Nicole explained that she had been forced into this situation by Jarrod, and their relationship was complicated. Jarrod was determined to tear her and her actual husband apart.

Telling the whole story of her past with Jarrod would take days, so Nicole simply gave Leila the main points. In her heart, Roscoe was her only husband, and if she were to marry, it would only be to him.

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Leila was shocked to hear this. She had always believed Jarrod was Nicoles husband. After all, he had always been there for her, even acknowledging himself as her husband when the doctor asked for the patients family. So that wasnt the case This fragile young Nicole was truly deserving of pity.

Why dont you go to the police? Leila asked and then felt a bit foolish for even asking. Jarrod was no ordinary man. Going to the authorities would likely prove useless.

Nicole offered a wry smile in response. Ive tried everything possible.

Seeing Nicoles drawn, pale face and the sharp contours of her chin, Leila felt a surge of sympathy. Then how can I help you?

Nicole felt a surge of hope. She hadnt planned to deceive Leila from the beginning. She simply saw kindness in Leila and decided to take a chance. Surprisingly, her risk seemed to be paying off.

Leilas kindness allowed Nicole a brief moment of forgiveness toward fate.

I believe hes being treated here as well, but Im not sure which room. Could you please find out where Roscoe, the young master of the Watts family, is staying?

Nicole suspected Roscoe might be in this hospital because it was the best in Ardleys.

Considering the Watts familys commitment to Roscoes well-being, they would naturally choose the best hospital, particularly famous for its orthopedics department. The odds were good, about ninety percent, that Roscoe was here.

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Leila empathized with her but couldnt promise her message would reach him, simply stating, Miss Lawrence, Ill do my best.

That was enough reassurance for Nicole. She held Leilas hand, expressing her gratitude, Thank you, Leila. Thank you

Later, Leila continued with her normal activities, heading home after her shift and coming back to work the following day.

Jarrold was unusually careful this time. Even the nurses like Leila received escorts home from bodyguards, who also watched over them until they returned to work.

Nicole, however, thought this was likely Alecs doing. Jarrod typically didnt bother with such details.

Alec was frustrated. After being outsmarted by Nicole twice, he was extra wary around her now.

Alec struggled to grasp Jarrolds conflicted feelings for Nicole, a blend of love and hatred, which he found difficult to understand.

These emotions were new to him. Anyway, Jarrod operated on a level beyond his understanding.

Days later, Leila seized an opportunity. She had previously given some home-cooked meals to the driver who took her back and forth.

The driver appreciated the home-cooked flavor, a refreshing change from the usual heavy city meals. His respect for Leila grew.

Leila prepared more dishes for the driver, which he enjoyed in the car, but he later suffered a stomach upset from some other fast food.

Leila invited the driver to her home for some medicine and rest.

Given that the drivers responsible for commuting nurses like Leila werent as closely monitored as those for Jarrod, and considering Leila was old enough to be their mother, with her husband also at home, they accepted her invitation.

In a moment of opportunity, Leila excused herself to go grocery shopping and left the house.

This time, without a driver tailing her, Leila disguised herself with a hat and went back to the hospital. She spent some time asking around the mens ward until she finally found Roscoes room.

Guards were stationed in front of Roscoes room. She waited for a long time but couldnt find a chance to get inside.

Leila was determined. She wasnt ready to give up just yet.

Nicole had gone out of her way to secure a top-notch tutor for Leilas son, bypassing a lengthy waitlist that even money couldnt shorten.

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Nicoles recommendation convinced the esteemed tutor to offer his tutoring services at no charge. It was an opportunity that money alone couldnt buy.

Thus, Leila felt a strong resolve to assist Nicole today. Unable to find a way in, she stepped outside, lost in thought under the second-floor windows.

At that moment, a child was playing with a remote-controlled plane nearby, sparking an idea in Leila. She walked up to the child and said, Hey, could you use your plane to deliver something to that window for me?

The child agreed without hesitation.

Leila placed a carefully written note into the plane, which the child then expertly flew up to the second-floor window.

The plane hovered at the windowsill, and the child knocked on the window three times with it, yet no one responded from inside.

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Undeterred, the child knocked a few more times until the window swung open.

Leila glimpsed a handsome, youthful face. It radiated a warm charm, quite unlike the unfriendly handsomeness of Jarrod she was accustomed to. The man appeared to wheel his chair closer to the window.

Leila found herself staring at the man a little Longer, her thoughts drifting as if she were sizing up a potential son-in-law, feeling quite happy for Nicole. Such a bright and affable young man seemed perfect for Nicole. After all, a pair of somber souls wouldnt make a happy match.

Roscoe took the note and glanced downward.

Leila waved, catching his attention, and he nodded in response.

Roscoe quickly wrote a message on a tiny piece of paper, slid it into the toy plane, and attached a couple of fancy chocolates to it as a special treat for the child.

Realizing it was time to leave, Leila collected the note, waved goodbye, and left. Once home, her heart raced with excitement, relieved to find the driver still resting.

That afternoon back at the hospital, Leila managed to pass the note to Nicole.

Nicole waited until the quiet of midnight to read the note. It was penned in Roscoe's bold and elegant handwriting. Can't contact now. Working on it.

Nicole's heart raced as she read the message. Can't contact now meant he was unable to connect with Austin.

Nicole felt a wave of fear. It had been days since she had any communication with Austin or the nanny.

The nanny had worked for Nicole for years and likely sensed something was wrong.

Nicole had instructed the nanny to take Austin overseas immediately if she became unreachable. All the preparations were in place. She wondered whether the nanny had already left.

Tossing and turning, Nicole lay awake, her mind filled with concerns for Austin and the nanny. She hadn't even noted that Jarrod had been absent for days.

It was ten days later when Jarrod finally made his appearance.

During his absence, Nicole had been moved from her hospital room to one of Jarrod's villas.

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When Jarrod showed up, there was a noticeable change in him. The typically detached man appeared somewhat more approachable. His tone and manner were oddly cheerful, which Nicole sensed was not a positive sign.

Before Nicole could reflect on it more, Jarrod asked, Are you getting used to it here?

Ignoring his question, Nicole pressed him, When are you taking me to see Roscoe? You had promised me.

At this, Jarrod looked at her and scoffed. I think there's someone else you'd rather see more than Roscoe.

Nicole tensed up, asking, Who?

Jarrod gazed at her, his eyes as deep and dark as the sea.

Nicole's anxiety intensified. She said once more, her voice shaky, Cut to the chase, Jarrod. Who are you talking about?

Jarrod stopped teasing. With a flick of his fingers, two familiar figures appeared at the top of the staircase.

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The nanny was assisting a little boy as they walked toward Nicole.

Before the nanny could utter a word, tears streamed down her face.

Miss

The little boy glanced at Nicole, hesitantly silent. For him, this mother was someone he yearned to love but felt too distant to approach. Their time together had been so limited. He was familiar only with the nanny and Roscoe, and now, someone claiming to be his father had shown up.

Nicole stood rooted to the spot as if paralyzed. How could this happen How could they be here At that moment, she wished that it was all just a dream, that none of this was real. But it wasn't a dream. Once more, it seemed the heavens remained indifferent to her distress.

Jarrold stepped closer, gently squatted down, and tenderly placed his hands on the little boy's shoulders. He whispered, Austin, call her

Mom.

Austin's eyes, heavy with longing, opened slightly. He had only ever called Nicole Mom in his dreams. Could this dream now be coming true? He suddenly had both a mom and a dad

Nicole shivered from head to toe. Her fingernails pressed into her palms, drawing blood. She had an urge to scream, to let out a wild cry, but she held back, afraid of scaring Austin. All she could do was shake like a leaf.

Mommy Austin's voice wavered.

Tears began to flood Nicole's cheeks, quickly overwhelming her. Her weeping started with soft sobs and then escalated into loud cries.

Mm Ah

Austin moved closer and embraced Nicole, his tears starting to fall.

Mommy

After a while, Nicole wiped her tears and looked at Austin Go play with the nanny for a bit. Mommy will come find you soon.

Austin nodded obediently and walked toward the nanny.

The nanny gave Nicole a look that hinted she had more to say but held back, aware of Jarrold's watchful

eyes, and took Austin away.

Once they were gone, Nicole collapsed to the floor, drained of all her strength. It was as though her foundational supports had just collapsed. Utterly devastated, she felt trapped.

Jarrold She called out to him tiredly. Tell me, what do you want? Or rather, what are you planning?

Jarrood looked at her with a sneer. Nicole, first tell me, whose child is he?

Jarrood had conducted a long investigation to get some answers. He hadn't been able to accept it until he saw Austin. Seeing Austin in the courtyard, his suspicions were cleared. That was definitely his child. They bore such a striking resemblance that he deemed a paternity test unnecessary.

Still, to silence any protest from Nicole, Jarrood proceeded with the test, and as expected, the results confirmed it. Austin was his son.

His son, indeed. Nicole had secretly borne his child!

Even with the evidence in hand, Jarrood still demanded confirmation from Nicole. He stepped closer, towering over her. Tell me, whose child is this?